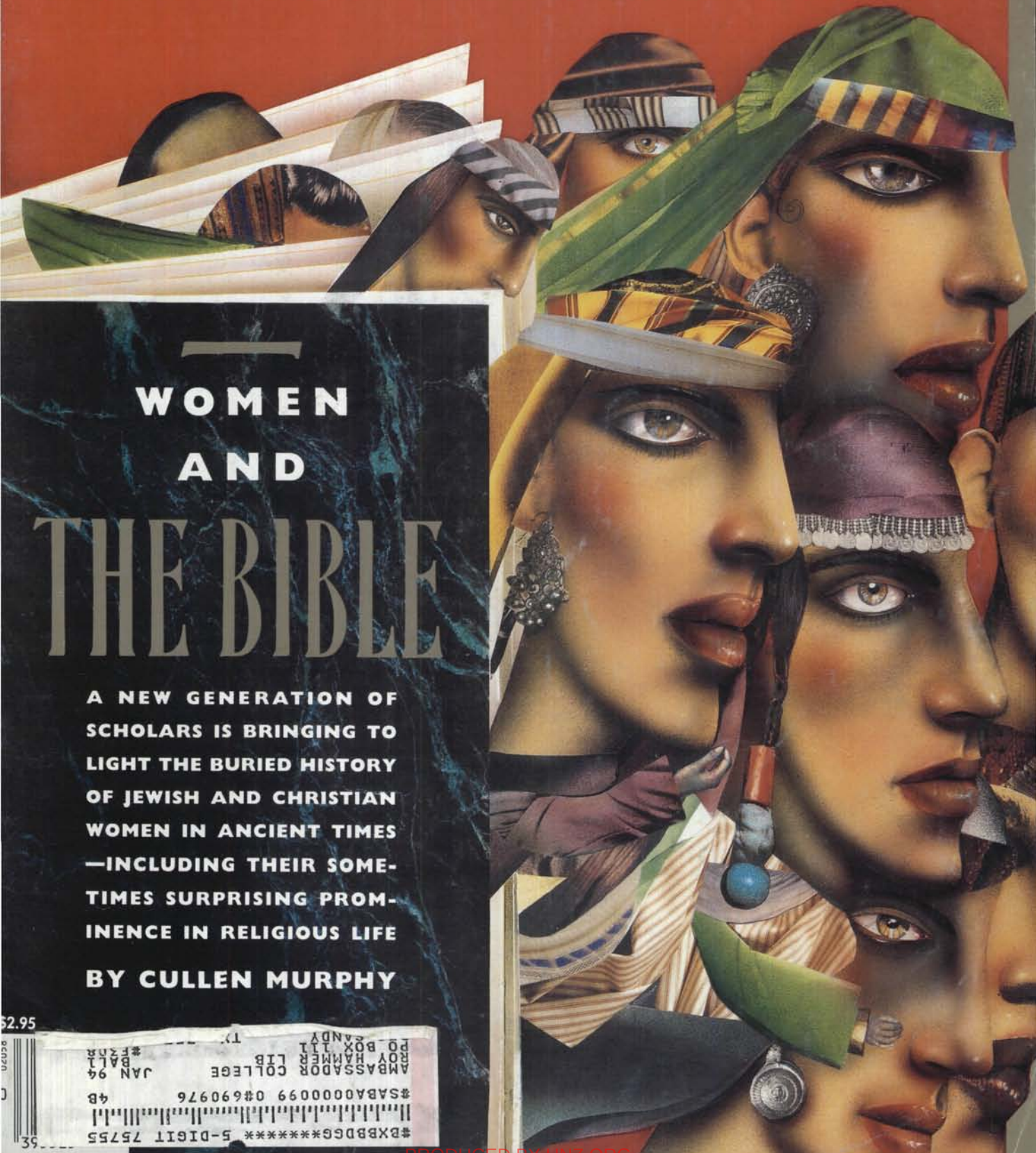


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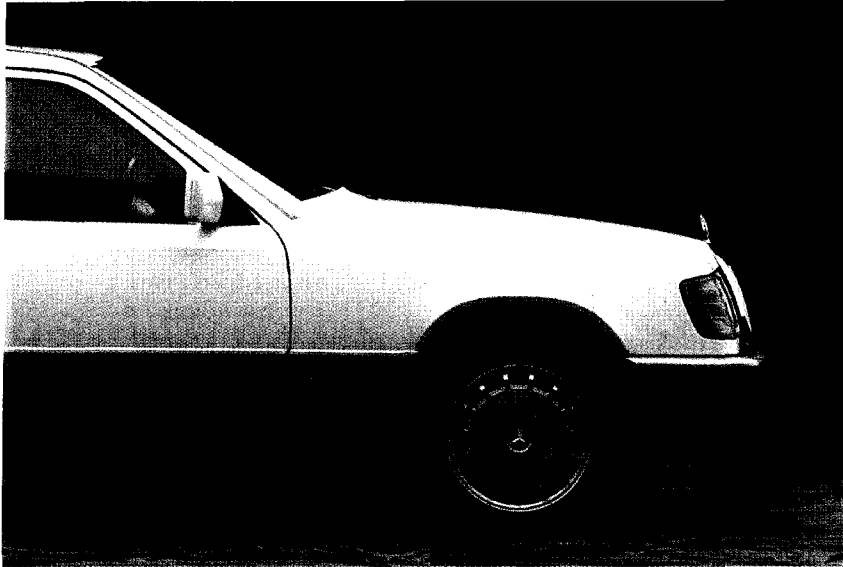
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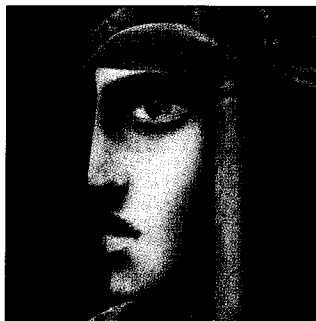
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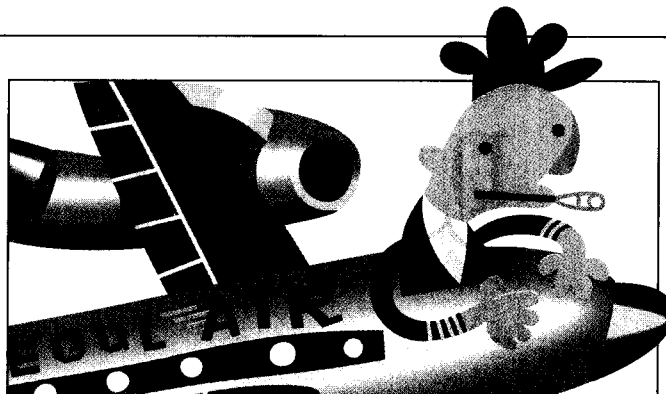
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Page 39



Page 82



Page 20

REPORTS & COMMENT

- 18** **NOTES:**
A CALL TO ORDER
Focusing attention on the underlying factors that contribute to the nation's social woes may be admirable. It should not supply an excuse.
by JACK BEATTY

- 20** **ZAIRE:**
AN AFRICAN HORROR STORY
Three years ago the Zairean despot Mobutu Sese Seko, under domestic and foreign pressure, agreed to move toward democracy. But he has retained power, presiding over the violent disintegration of his country.
by BILL BERKELEY

- 30** **DIPLOMACY:**
CLEANSING ETHNIC HATRED
Can a form of group therapy help resolve ethnic strife? Vamik Volkan, a psychoanalyst, has been experimenting with Russians and Balts.
by ROBERT CULLEN

HUMOR, FICTION, AND POETRY

- 65** **INDECISION**
by GUY BILLOUT

39 WOMEN AND THE BIBLE

In feminist eyes, the Bible is a distinctly unfriendly document: androcentric in the extreme, it has been used for millennia to justify the subordination of women to men. Now scholars looking at the Bible afresh—with a focus on women—are challenging many traditional biblical interpretations. They are also, albeit with great difficulty, uncovering new details about the role of women in ancient Israel and in early Christian communities.

by CULLEN MURPHY

82 WHAT WENT RIGHT

The deregulation of the airline industry has been widely portrayed as a disaster. Fares, it is said, have gone up, even as service has been cut back. Travelers, it is said, can avail themselves of fewer nonstop flights. And flying, it is said, is not as safe as it used to be. These assertions and many others about deregulation, the author contends, are simply not true.

by PAUL SHEEHAN



- 66** **PIPA'S STORY**
by LAN SAMANTHA CHANG

- 74** **RED LEATHER JACKET**
by BRAD LEITHAUSER

- 80** **DISAPPEARANCES:**
A POETRY ANTHOLOGY
by JANE KENYON, DAVID WEISS, ROBERT MORGAN, KAY RYAN, AND LINDA PASTAN

ARTS AND LEISURE

- 90** **MUSIC:**
LIVE FROM BAYREUTH
Performances of Richard Wagner's operas spanning several decades are newly available on CD and video. The author offers a guide to the choices.

by MATTHEW GUREWITSCH

- 94** **TRAVEL:**
ON A BIKE,
RELUCTANTLY
A cycling neophyte finds that luxury bicycle trips are not an acquired taste.
by CORBY KUMMER

BOOKS

- 98** **JUSTICE TO THEODORE DREISER**
by MICHAEL LYDON

- 101** **THE PASSION OF MODERNITY**
Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity, by Liah Greenfeld
by STANLEY HOFFMANN

- 108** **BRIEF REVIEWS**
by PHOEBE-LOU ADAMS

OTHER DEPARTMENTS

- 4** **745 BOYLSTON STREET/**
CONTRIBUTORS

- 8** **LETTERS**
TO THE EDITOR

- 16** **THE AUGUST ALMANAC**

- 111** **THE PUZZLER**
by EMILY COX AND HENRY RATHVON

- 112** **WORD WATCH**
by ANNE H. SOUKHANOV

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745 BOYLSTON STREET

TWO FACTORS GOVERN MUCH of the journalistic writing about religion in America. The first is an attitude that one sometimes encounters, consisting mostly of condescension but having the odd flash of cynicism. Edward Gibbon, in his famous assessment of religion in Rome under the Antonines, nicely caught both qualities: "The various modes of worship, which prevailed in the Roman world, were all considered by the people, as equally true; by the philosopher, as equally false; and by the magistrate, as equally useful."

The second factor, more basic, involves the demands of the news business. Most religious activity today—regular, private, uneventful—is the very opposite of news. Indeed, the truly important headlines in the world's great religions were made hundreds if not thousands of years ago. Not surprisingly, the attention of the press is focused less on any religion's enduring character than on the role religion may play with respect to the secular issues of our time—or on commotion of some kind that religion may have caused. That is to say, religion tends to receive attention to the degree that its influence is felt in the larger, "outside" world. Religion is a story in the same way weather is. When the Catholic Church makes news, in all likelihood the news will be about abortion or doctrinal dissent or troubled priests. Evangelical

Protestantism, for its part, tends to come up disproportionately in news stories about national politics and religious conservatives. Judaism seems most often discussed in the context of anti-Semitism, race relations, and civil rights. Islam? The news background against which that faith is seen is all too often violent and tragic.

The long lead time involved in the publication of a monthly magazine (two months elapse between the arrival of a manuscript and its appearance in print, if we hurry) has its irritations. But that long lead time compensates for them with a signal benefaction: it removes us somewhat from the headlines, forces us to take a step back. Such discipline is especially valuable when it comes to the subject of religion. It affords an opportunity to confront religion on its own terms and consider matters of content and history. Over the past several years we have tried to avail ourselves of that opportunity with articles ranging from Glenn Tinder's "Can We Be Good Without God?" (December, 1989) to Bernard Lewis's "Islam and Liberal Democracy" (February, 1993). This month's cover story, "Women and the Bible," by Cullen Murphy, is but the latest example.

All these articles are tethered, of course, to very real present-day concerns. But the issues they raise will not soon lose their currency.

—THE EDITORS

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BILL BERKELEY ("Zaire: An African Horror Story") is a journalist and the author of *Liberia: A Promise Betrayed* (1986).

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CULLEN MURPHY ("Women and the Bible") is the managing editor of *The Atlantic Monthly*. He writes the comic strip *Prince Valiant* and is the author, with William Rathje, of *Rubbish!: The Archaeology*

of Garbage (1992). Murphy's article "Who Do Men Say That I Am?", about research on Jesus, was *The Atlantic's* cover story in December of 1986.

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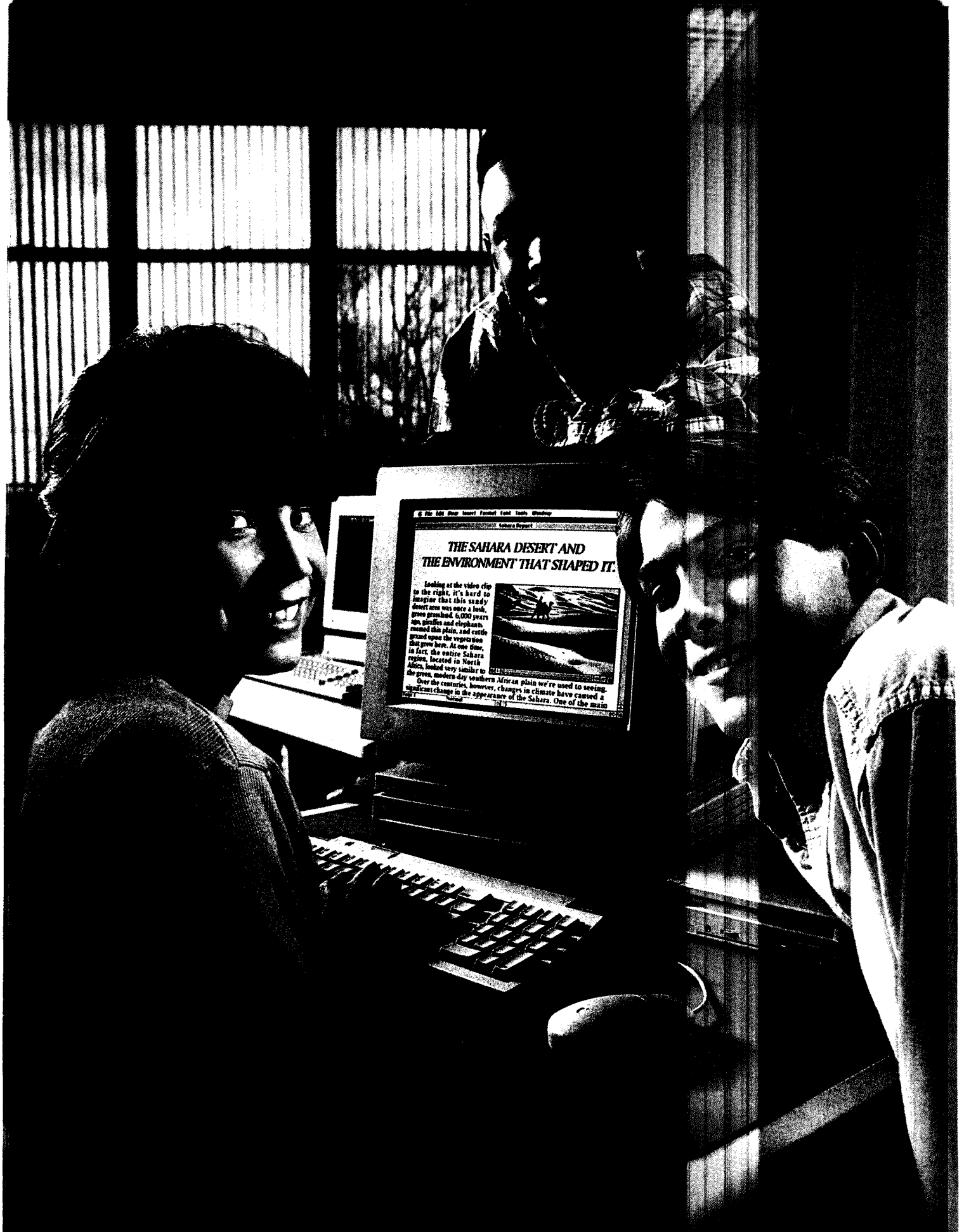
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



MIDLIFE MYTHS

The author of your cover story "Midlife Myths" (May *Atlantic*), Winifred Gallagher, attempts to set up Gail Sheehy as a straw "man" whose books have supposedly represented middle life as crisis-ridden and menopause only as a very difficult transition. Would that Gallagher felt the same obligation a good journalist does: to read a person's work before falsely representing it. Instead she seeks out obscure academics to criticize Sheehy's work unfairly.

Ten years ago Gail Sheehy published a scholarly book, *Pathfinders*, the central thesis of which was that "older is better." Her three years of research were based on two national surveys that yielded 60,000 life-history questionnaires, followed by dozens of research workshops and personal interviews in thirty-eight states, four Canadian provinces, and three European countries. She wrote, "Consistently, in every sample, whether men or women, the people who enjoy the highest well-being in life are likely to be the older ones." She found that the decade between forty-six and fifty-five is not likely to proceed smoothly at first for women. But, she wrote, "despite the danger zone, a mobilization usually begins in the late forties that registers with rising exhilaration as women move into their fifties." In contrast, the men she studied, whatever their external position, were most likely to hit their lowest ebb in their early fifties. "For many men, however, a takeoff into high satisfaction occurred in the late fifties, rose in the early part of the sixties, and for a considerable number leveled off beyond that on a high plateau."

Gallagher attempts to dismiss Sheehy's landmark book, *Passages*, by quoting Gilbert Brim as saying it's focused on "selected case studies that illustrate a theory that has no broad empirical support." "Empirical" means "verifi-

able by experience." *Passages* has remained a backlist bestseller for eighteen years and is published in twenty-eight languages; a 1991 Library of Congress survey placed it among the top ten books that have most influenced people's lives. That is broad empirical support.

The Silent Passage, Sheehy's groundbreaking book on menopause, which I edited, is also represented speciously—as if she portrayed all menopausal women as depressed and overwhelmed. In fact Sheehy introduced a thesis that has revolutionized the way people think about and talk about this stage of life: "Today, fifty is the apex of the female life cycle. And today, menopause is more properly seen as the gateway to a *second adulthood*, a series of stages never before part of the predictable life cycle for other than the very long-lived." That millions of women have recognized their experience in Sheehy's book is demonstrated by the fact that it remains on the *New York Times* bestseller list after forty-three weeks and is being published in twenty-one countries. (Now out in paperback, *The Silent Passage* is, at this writing, No. 1 on the *Times* bestseller list.)

Gallagher quotes an epidemiologist, John McKinlay, as if he were an authority on menopause. He makes the pronouncement that hormone-replacement therapy "is inappropriate for the vast majority of women, who shouldn't use it." He also makes sweeping statements about men in middle life: "There's no physiological, endocrinological, psychological, or clinical basis for a male menopause." The real experts in the field, who cooperated extensively with Sheehy on her recent article about viropause—the urologist Tom Lue, of the University of California at San Francisco, and the Harvard endocrinologist Richard Spark, a recognized world authority on hormones—say they have never heard of John McKinlay.

Further, Gallagher cites unsupport-

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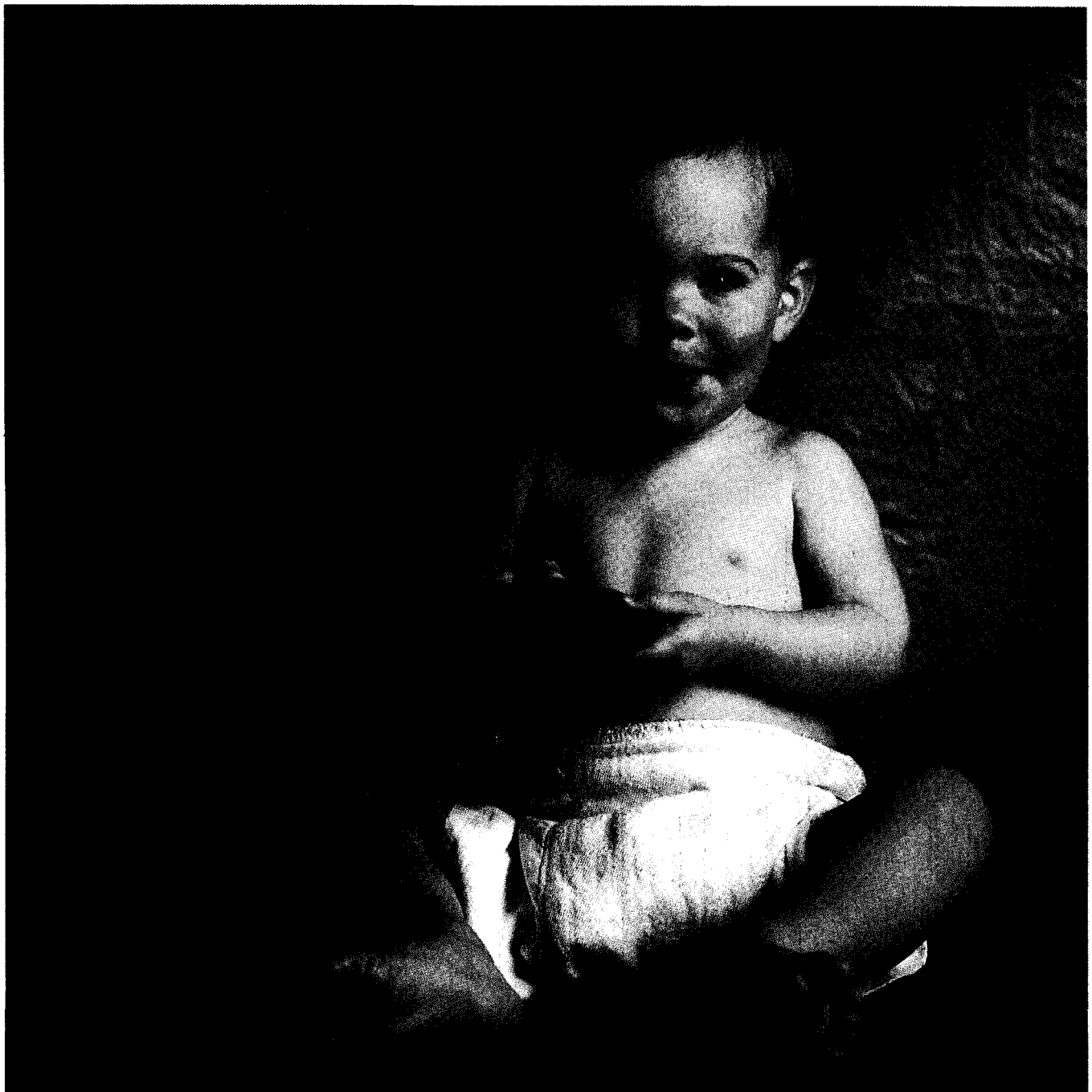
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able statistics from a health psychologist at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, who claims that "only a minority of women—about ten percent—have a tough time psychologically" during menopause. Sheehy uses the figures consistently cited in surveys of the existing literature and vetted by the Congressional Office of Technology and Assessment: 15 percent of women report no difficulty, another 15 percent are rendered to some degree dysfunctional, and 70 percent report some discomfort. Sheehy has alerted women to a phase called perimenopause, and in her new, expanded edition of *The Silent Passage* points out that "it is the women aged forty-five to forty-nine years *and still menstruating* who show a peak in minor mental symptoms in the first years immediately prior to the end of their cycles," an observation confirmed by a review of recent British and Dutch population surveys. She adds that women in the post-menopausal years have the lowest levels of depression compared with women at any other stage of life, and discusses at

length the phenomenon of "post-menopausal zest."

ROBERT D. LOOMIS
Random House
New York, N.Y.

Winifred Gallagher's "Midlife Myths" has a superb topic but an awful and unfair title, which became more understandable as I read the article. Although Gallagher covers many important arenas in aging, she fails to explore a dimension of aging that is part of all our "myths": a greater concern with the spiritual life as mortality and the body insist on their due. That she cites Carl Jung, who believed that the second half of life finds a great attraction for things spiritual, and then leaves him behind almost immediately in order to pursue a thin sociological overview of middle age, left me very unsatisfied.

Her study builds on the popular secular assumption that myths are things untrue, fallacious, and to be avoided in favor of the much more reliable tenets of empirical facts. But missed in this

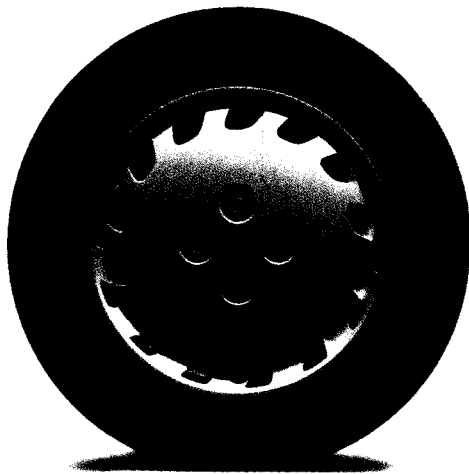
wrongheadedness about myths—which have more to do with the values, beliefs, and assumptions that underpin a culture and give it guidance, if not strength—is that she then offers up tale after tale of the mythology of middle age. She speaks of rites of passage, initiation into new perspectives, realizing one's limits, and redesigning one's aspirations.

Such a narrow treatise on middle age, bereft of the call of spirit and myth, leaves her study both shallow and devoid of imaginative content. She has indeed left the soul out of mortality.

DENNIS PATRICK SLATTERY
San Antonio, Texas

The message of "Midlife Myths" seems to be that life satisfaction in the middle years comes from "downward comparison" and "a triumph of the adaptation of aspirations to realities." If this were true, then the surest route to happiness would be to aspire to nothing and accomplish nothing.

Perhaps my age has not yet sufficiently muddled, but I would still prefer to be a maladjusted achiever, or an



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ambitious failure, rather than a complacent mediocrity.

FRED WEHLING
Santa Monica, Calif.

Winifred Gallagher replies:

Considering Robert Loomis's emphasis on the vast influence exerted by Gail Sheehy's books about midlife and menopause, his outrage when they excite scholarly criticism is puzzling. If prominent researchers differ with Ms. Sheehy (in the course of a long article her name comes up twice), Mr. Loomis dismisses their data and disparages them as unfair "obscure academics." One such is the psychologist Gilbert Brim, the director of the MacArthur Foundation's Research Network on Successful Midlife Development, formerly the president of the Russell Sage Foundation and the Foundation for Child Development and the chairman of the American Institutes for Research. Regarding Mr. Loomis's assertion that if many people buy a book, such as *Passages*, and believe in its theories, then those theories must be true,

Dr. Brim says, "If being a bestseller can bestow empirical support, astrology is science."

On learning that Ms. Sheehy's editor questions his scientific credentials, John McKinlay, an epidemiologist at the New England Research Institute and Boston University who directs the 1,700-subject Massachusetts Male Aging Study, was surprised, because Ms. Sheehy has repeatedly requested interviews with him (which he has refused) and has respectfully cited his research in her writings and on the *Today* show. The author of many internationally recognized scholarly publications, Dr. McKinlay was also puzzled to hear that he was unknown to two colleagues, one of whom has recently agreed to a professional collaboration.

On the subject of what constitutes the typical experience of menopause, Karen Matthews, a professor of psychiatry, epidemiology, and psychology at the School of Medicine of the University of Pittsburgh, does indeed disagree with Ms. Sheehy. In contrast to less sophisticated analyses, her longitudinal

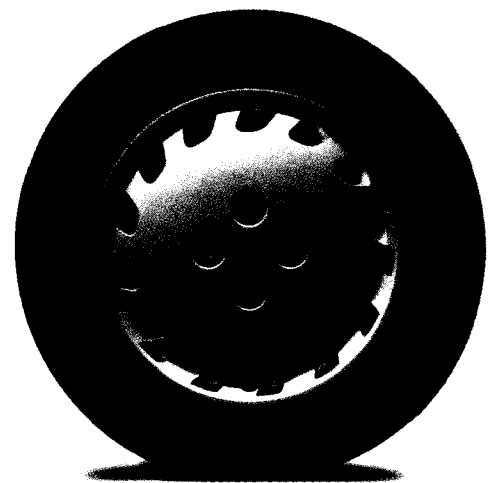
research shows that the distress of the minority who have a difficult menopause is likely to be linked with pre-existing personal troubles or with "negative life events"—say, difficulties with children—that coincide with the climacteric. Dr. Matthews says, "Leaders of opinion in the field report different findings than those in Gail Sheehy's book—which may foster the negative expectation that most women will have a difficult time."

Finally, regarding Mr. Loomis's instructions on good journalism: while Ms. Sheehy's bestsellers may be her editor's preoccupation, mine was the scientific research on middle age—a time of life that, despite the gloomy mythology, millions of us are enjoying.

VIETNAM: CLASS WAR?

In his review of our *Operations Research* article "America's Vietnam Casualties: Victims of a Class War?" James Fallows characterized the work as low-class, sophistic, preposterous, bogus,

ore roomy, more stable and considerably more fun to drive. **HONDA**





and educationally corrupt ("Vietnam: Low-Class Conclusions," April *Atlantic*). He implied that we are social-science nitwits, and asserted that he was "almost embarrassed" to mention a "logical error . . . so grotesque" that it fatally flawed our analysis.

We agree that Fallows should be embarrassed, but mostly for the cynicism with which he distorted our work and the ersatz character of his indignation. For all his fulmination, he showed much furtive sympathy for what we did and came intriguingly close to conceding our main point—namely, that Americans' death rates in Vietnam correlated only weakly with their incomes.

Our grotesque error, according to Fallows, is that we assumed at the outset the equal-sacrifice premise we were supposedly trying to investigate. We did no such thing: in a calculation that we explicitly called "first pass," we explored whether affluent U.S. communities had Vietnam casualty rates different from those in poor or moderate-income ones. We measured a community's economic standing by its 1969 median family income. Fallows's complaint is that a community's diversity makes its median income an inadequate proxy for any given resident's income.

We had acknowledged that point and clearly labeled our cross-community analysis provisional. It did allow us, however, to investigate Fallows's earlier claim that the Vietnam War would have ended sooner if "the mothers of Beverly Hills and Chevy Chase and Great Neck and Belmont [had been] on the phones to their Congressmen screaming 'you killed my boy!'" (Evidently Fallows did not find these communities too diverse to generalize about their residents.) We found that per capita casualty rates exceeded the national average in three of these upscale towns (Belmont, Chevy Chase, and Great Neck), as did the overall rate for the four. Although we doubt that Fallows found this outcome uninteresting, he chose not to mention it in his review.

We devoted an entire section of our paper to discussing the inadequacies of our "first pass" analysis. To circumvent such difficulties, we obtained separate permissions from the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines to review military files of 1,200 Vietnam War dead at the National Archives in St. Louis. These files provided exact home addresses for and supplementary information about

the deceased that made clear, for example, whether casualties from affluent suburbs were typical residents of such communities. We were able to distribute hundreds of Chicago's casualties among more than 2,000 block groups, the smallest geographic units for which the Census Bureau provides economic data. With the new information (much of which even Fallows conceded was impressive) we were able to make far more precise statements about the casualties' economic status than we could at the outset.

It was thus unfair for Fallows to imply that our initial median-income approximation was central to our findings. Indeed, the more precise our calculations became, the *lower* was their estimate of casualty-rate disparity by income. The first-pass calculation that Fallows found so ridiculous was the one most congenial to his class-war hypothesis.

Between insults Fallows implicitly complimented our work by repeating many of its key points. When we showed that the poorest Americans had casualty rates below the national average, Fallows found the outcome thoroughly plausible; such Americans, he explained, were often rejected from military service for "medical, educational, or disciplinary" reasons. (That fact gets no mention in his own "Class War" article.) Fallows echoed our explanation that affluent soldiers were at high risk for death in Vietnam because they served disproportionately in such hazardous roles as pilot and infantry lieutenant. Indeed, Fallows quietly accepted the thrust of our argument about why U.S. death rates per thousand military-age males were not strongly correlated with income.

Interestingly, Fallows elaborated on his class-war concept in ways that reduce its vulnerability to our research findings. The theory now concerns the "American Army in Vietnam," as if Navy, Air Force, and Marine sacrifices were irrelevant. (The affluent were more heavily represented in these services than in the Army.) Moreover, class war is now to be measured not just by death patterns but by such far-less-tragic events as career disruptions.

Fallows went on to assert that well-chosen anecdotes reveal more about Vietnam deaths than any laborious exercise like ours. But his anecdotes largely concern students at Harvard, Yale, MIT, and Princeton, whose Viet-

nam-era behavior he tacitly extrapolated to all middle-class college youths (as if similar anecdotes could easily have arisen at Brigham Young, Tulane, Texas A&M, and Western Michigan). The value of neutral data analysis is that it avoids giving the most conspicuous patterns a weight all out of proportion to their numbers.

Fallows also suggested that our findings are suspect simply because they diverge from widely held views. That seems a tenuous line of argument given the widespread but erroneous belief that U.S. Vietnam casualties were disproportionately black.

Particularly upsetting to Fallows was that we allowed our study to be reported (and potentially misused) by the media. But any prior misrepresentations of our work were negligible compared with Fallows's own. And why should the public discussion of "class war" be monopolized by those people who glorify anecdotal evidence?

Although we cannot discuss Fallows's other arguments because of space constraints, we see no merit in them. We will gladly send our paper without charge to those who request it.

ARNOLD BARNETT
*Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Cambridge, Mass.*

TIMOTHY STANLEY
*U.S. Military Academy
West Point, N.Y.*

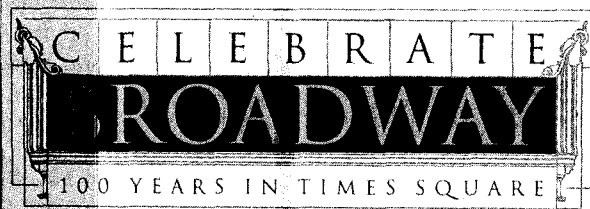
As the author of *Working-Class War: American Combat Soldiers and Vietnam*, I am naturally skeptical of the statistical study of U.S. fatalities in Vietnam conducted by my MIT colleague Arnold Barnett and his associates. My own work argues that some 80 percent of American enlisted men were working-class or poor.

Here, however, I hope to expand the terms of debate. First, social classes are not statistical categories; they are complex historical relationships. Quantitative data on income, occupation, and education (and arguments about how to gather and interpret it) are only part of the story. Class consciousness is equally important, and virtually every veteran I have met perceived fundamental disproportions in the social composition of American forces.

Also, analyses of who composed the Vietnam-era military should examine the institutions and programs that shaped it—the Selective Service, Pro-

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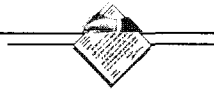
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ject 100,000 (designed to “uplift” the disadvantaged by conscripting poor men who flunked the military intelligence test), the National Guard and reserves (havens for the privileged), and the job market. These institutional forces channeled the working class into the military, the middle and upper classes toward college and careers. There were exceptions, of course, but most soldiers from middle-class backgrounds saw themselves as exceptional.

Above all, the question of who fought in Vietnam should not be debated in isolation from questions about the justice of the war. In Vietnam, U.S. soldiers encountered a reality radically at odds with the official explanations provided by the war’s architects. Many working-class veterans feel anger and remorse about the war not only because they did a disproportionate share of the fighting but also because they found no moral basis in U.S. intervention and military policy. It was wrong that they did most of the fighting, but the war itself was the greater injustice. No Americans should have been sent to war in Vietnam.

CHRISTIAN APPY
*Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Cambridge, Mass.*

James Fallows replies:

The letter from Arnold Barnett and Timothy Stanley helps explain the hostile tone of my article, for it displays exactly the trait I found so infuriating in their *Operations Research* study. That trait, to put it simply, is a desire to have it both ways. Barnett and Stanley want to operate within the narrow, artificial constraints of a social-science statistical study, ignoring any factor that does not fit their research model. But then they want to apply their findings to the messy, complex world of real political argument—and have them treated with special respect because they are “quantitative” and “non-anecdotal.”

The letter from Christian Appy, Barnett’s colleague at MIT, illustrates by counterexample what I objected to in Barnett and Stanley’s work. (The study I criticized had a third co-author, Michael Shore, who, like Stanley, worked on the project as a student under Barnett’s supervision.) In his letter as in his recent book, Appy makes an explicitly political argument about the war. I generally agree with his contentions—but even if I didn’t, I would have to ac-

knowledge the integrity of his argumentative style. He rests his case entirely on his evidence. He does not try to borrow authority from his status as an “expert.” Most important, he does not artificially exclude or limit evidence to fit the peculiarities of his academic discipline.

Now consider the kind of evidence that Barnett and his colleagues deliberately left out of their study. They wanted to investigate the effects of “class,” but there is no precise index of class. Therefore they took one big step toward simplification by concentrating on something they could quantify, the family income of dead soldiers, and ignoring everything else: education, occupation, ethnicity, religion, mobility, and the many other real-world components of class. As it turned out, there was no way to measure family income directly, so the Barnett team took the further dizzying step of assuming that each soldier’s family income was the median income of his home town.

Barnett and Stanley now stress that this was merely a “first pass” through the data, but anyone who reads their study will see that despite the statistical refinements of the further “passes,” the breathtaking median-income assumption lies beneath most of the statistical correlations they carry out. The main exception, as I mentioned in my article, came when they examined home addresses and detailed data for a small sample of dead soldiers—and in this case they ask us to accept their subjective, anecdotal assurance that the soldiers’ families were typical of the neighborhoods where they lived. From this radically truncated version of American society the Barnett study proposes to draw conclusions about class and Vietnam.

I would never have complained about this study if the researchers had been scrupulous about its limits. If they had said, “A mathematical model suggests smaller-than-expected disparity in overall death rates between wealthier and poorer communities,” they would have been on entirely secure ground. But they were not scrupulous. Paragraph by paragraph the study contains caveats, but its overall ambition, as its title suggests, is to rebut the larger concept of a class war. The opening section lists a number of people, including me, who have argued that Vietnam was indeed a class war; the study clearly sets

itself up as a test of such ideas. A summary of the study, omitting some of its assumptions, was mailed to journalists, many of whom wrote it up as a rebuttal of conventional wisdom about the class war. After William F. Buckley wrote a column saying that the Barnett study proved that Vietnam had been an “all-American effort,” he received a congratulatory letter from the researchers, with no cautions about how he had interpreted their findings.

Even now Barnett and Stanley seem not to recognize the difference between whatever it was they measured and the idea of deep class inequities during the Vietnam years. The latter is a historical and political concept, which involves all the factors Christian Appy lays out in his letter and many more. In 1975, when I wrote “What Did You Do in the Class War, Daddy?” I was trying to make a political rather than a purely demographic point. My argument boiled down to two propositions: that the upper- and upper-middle classes were sheltered from the effects of the war, because of student deferments and the anti-war movement’s tendency to avoid the draft rather than refuse induction; and that the war went on longer than it would have if more influential Americans had felt at risk.

I could have been completely wrong in what I said. But showing that I was wrong, or that Christian Appy is wrong in his much more substantial work, requires dealing with comparable political and historical realities—how the protest movement behaved, how draft boards operated, how politicians took sides about the war. Barnett and Stanley apparently still think that they can “investigate the claim” of class war with survey data for Belmont and Great Neck. When I wrote the sentence Barnett and Stanley quote, I thought it would be obvious to any reader that I was using these names as metaphors for upper-middle-class America, much as I might refer to Washington’s journalistic-social elite as “Georgetown,” regardless of what detailed census data for the real Georgetown might show.

I hope that readers will indeed ask for copies of the Barnett study. I hope that after reading it they will carefully compare its reasoning, evidence, and plausibility with those of Christian Appy’s *Working-Class War*. (My 1975 article, for the record, is incorporated in my book *More Like Us*.)



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THE AUGUST ALMANAC



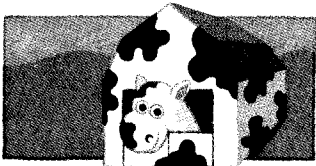
GOVERNMENT

August 1, starting today, girls in Texas will be allowed to try out for their high school football teams. Texas is one of the last states to adopt such a rule. In the 1991-1992 season 120 girls nationwide played high school football, alongside 912,845 of their male classmates. Also today, in Minnesota a law protecting homosexuals against discrimination in housing, employment, and education takes effect. 5, the Family and Medical Leave Act takes effect. 25, starting today, tobacco ads are banned from all of the 4,268 telephone booths on New York City property.

Q & A

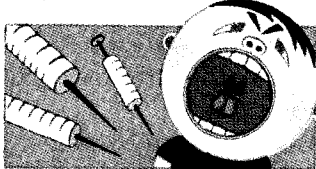
Why are most barns red?

Barns were generally unpainted until the late 1700s, when farmers began using coatings to decorate them and to protect the wood. These homemade preservatives often were based on skim milk and lime and were pigmented with soil or clay. In much of the United States the earth is rich in iron oxide, which imparted a red color. Red barns persisted even after affordable paint in an array of colors became available. In recent decades, however, more farmers have begun using the color of their barns to influence the temperature inside. As a result barns in warm, sunny regions of the country are increasingly painted in light colors (gray, off-white, gold, beige), while those in cold regions tend toward dark hues (green, blue, brown, and, of course, red).



DEMOGRAPHICS

Fewer accountants and tax preparers than usual may be taking their vacations in mid-summer this year. More than 5.5 million taxpayers requested extensions for filing their tax returns this year—almost a 15 percent increase over last year, and the largest number in more than a decade. Their returns are due by August 16. Part of the increase may be due to a regulatory change that now allows people to request an extension without also having to pay the projected balance due at that time. But the main culprit seems to be the \$25 billion decrease in payroll deductions ordered by President George Bush in January of 1992, as the presidential campaign was heating up, purportedly to stimulate the economy. In the absence of an accompanying tax decrease, the decrease in withholding meant that several million people who received refunds last year got a nasty surprise this spring when they discovered that they owed money to the IRS. Apparently many of them didn't have the cash, and filed for extensions.



HEALTH AND SAFETY

Public-health officials are bracing for a flood of toddlers needing their shots. August is traditionally a busy month for immunizations, since by law all school-age children must be vaccinated against certain diseases (the Centers for Disease Control recommend immunization against polio, diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, measles, mumps, rubella, *Haemophilus influenza*, and hepatitis B; which shots are actually required varies by state). Ideally most of the vaccinations—all but the one for polio are given by injection—would be given

before the child reaches the age of two, but nationwide less than half of two-year-olds meet the goal. In some inner cities only 10 percent do. Encouraged by the Clinton Administration's concern over this shortfall, public-health clinics and offices are stepping up their campaign to urge parents to have toddlers vaccinated. Mobile units will venture into housing projects and inner cities, clinics will extend their hours and expand their staffs, and vaccination stands will be set up in public parks and perhaps even at the beach.



THE SKIES

August 2, Full Moon, also known this month as the Green Corn or Sturgeon Moon. 11, the Perseid meteor shower (which lasts from July 23 to August 20) peaks tonight. Last September the Perseids' parent comet, Swift-Tuttle, was "recovered," or observed swinging past the Sun, for the first time since 1862, thus resolving a long-standing uncertainty (noted in this space a year ago) as to its next return. Since a comet's visit to the Sun leaves behind debris and we are now passing through Swift-Tuttle's leavings, the Perseids, always a good show, are likely to be especially dramatic this year. The last-quarter Moon rises around midnight and will hamper meteor-watching, so begin looking for the meteors at nightfall. 19, Saturn lies just south of the zenith at midnight.

FOOD

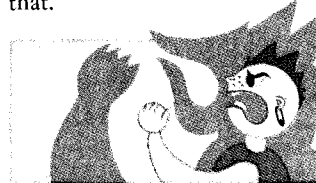
August 15, the deadline for the U.S. Department of Agriculture to submit for public comment new mandatory-labeling regulations for raw meat and poultry. New labels are a condition of the settlement of a lawsuit brought against Mike



Espy, the Secretary of Agriculture, in the wake of an outbreak of food poisoning in the Pacific Northwest last winter, in which more than 350 people were afflicted and three died. The outbreak was traced to undercooked hamburgers from fast-food restaurants. The plaintiffs in the lawsuit and other activists want the labels to discuss the dangers of *E. coli*, the pathogen in the Northwest outbreak, and other such bacteria. Meat producers and packers would prefer more-general handling and cooking instructions. Meanwhile, the U.S. Department of Agriculture will also be revamping its meat-inspection system over the next few years, and will be considering irradiation as a way to destroy bacteria in meat.

50 YEARS AGO

Lucien Price, writing in the August, 1943, issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*: "A boy in his teens is a crock of yeast in ferment. 'To flaming youth let virtue be as wax.' Instead of successive crops of adolescents indoctrinated at their most impressionable age with the basic practices of civilian life, of civil government, of humanistic learning and the creative arts, suppose you get crop after crop conditioned to something quite different and often exactly the reverse. Behind the warrior are at least three million years of hereditary instinct—plus some glandular adrenalin at the spur; behind the peaceable civilian are not more than three thousand years, if that."



*Because she'd rather eat
a chocolate brownie
with an 8 year-old
than dine in town.*

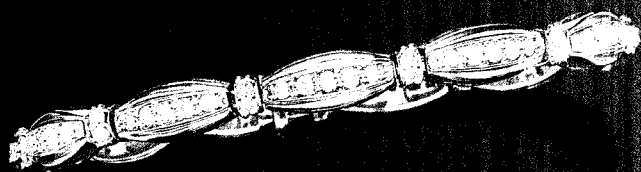
*Because she can't stand
foreign subtitles
or spiders*

on porch furniture.

Because today

is our Anniversary.

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REPORTS & COMMENT

NOTES

A Call to Order

Reflections on the rhetoric of evasion

THE UNITED STATES last year experienced the worst urban riot in its history and this year spent months in anxious anticipation of a new riot—if not following the verdict in the second Rodney King trial, then following the verdict in the trial of the three men accused of assaulting the truck driver Reginald Denny. What have we learned from this continuing ordeal? I hope we have learned to declare a moratorium on the rhetoric of “root causes.” In my perhaps controversial view, the search for the root causes of urban riots and violent crime generally is of no help to, and may even hinder, efforts to assert the moral primacy of civil order.

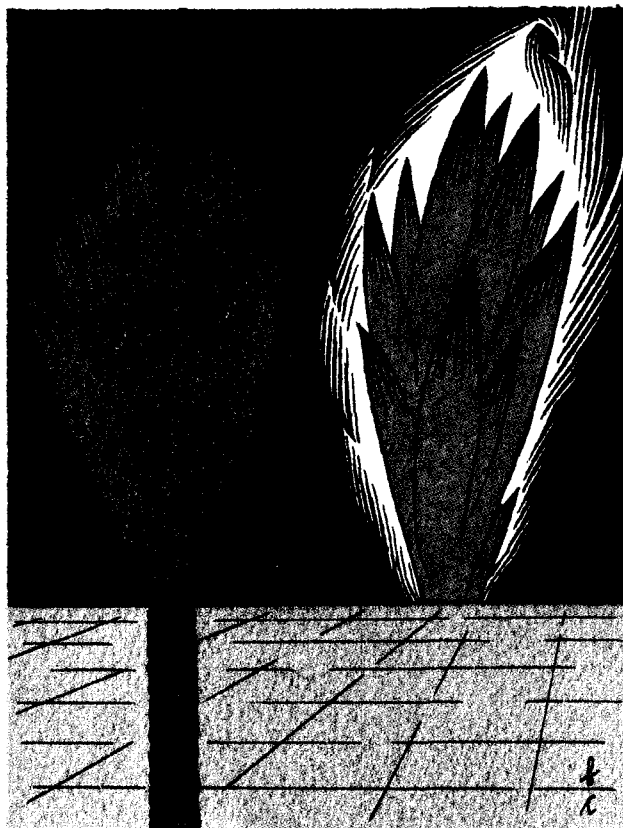
I cannot prove it, but I strongly suspect that the media blare of root causes, with its emphasis on racism, poverty, bad schools, broken families, substandard housing, unemployment, and social hopelessness, proffers tacit permission to criminality. Yes, these social pathologies exist, and they put an extraordinary strain on the civility of the minority youth who must endure them. But these conditions, difficult as they may be to

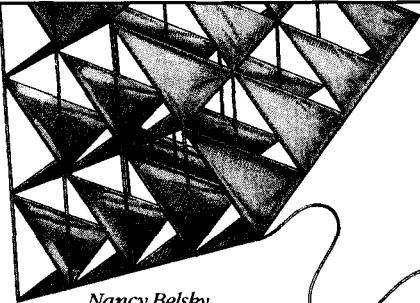
bear, do not excuse breaking the law. Every time a suitably tough response to urban crime is proposed, however—a mandatory life sentence, say, after a third conviction for a violent infraction—many object that root causes are to blame and that little can be done to combat crime until they are addressed. Of course, they never will be addressed, not in a way that would eliminate them or even mitigate them measurably—even though any sane person would agree that everything possible should be done to help communities riven by crime and poverty. But when you consider the scope of the challenge of mounting a successful war against poverty in a nation in which the mid-

dle class is losing economic ground, pointing at root causes is nothing more than a political evasion. Indeed, it is a moral catastrophe. Bad—in the sense of wrong, immoral, predatory, vicious, or depraved—choices by individuals lie behind most crime, not the operation of root causes. Even poor youths, even poor, ill-educated youths, even poor, ill-educated youths who live in a society suffused by racism, must be responsible for their acts. To believe otherwise is to espouse an environmental determinism nearly as offensive to reason and morality as racism. Crime, arson, running amok in the streets, have social contexts, not social causes. The incessant focus on the contexts is an insidious distraction that rests on the presumption that society is responsible for the crimes against it. That is legal and moral nonsense. Injustice may furnish an excuse for revolutionary violence, but not for violent crime.

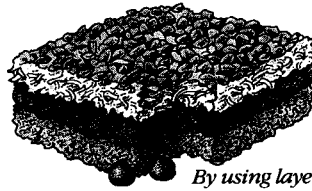
Bad as things are in America today for some minorities, they are not bad enough by the yardstick of either historical or contemporary oppression to justify revolutionary violence. As for violent crime, it is itself an injustice, not the answer to one. The ghettos of America need economic justice, but they need social order more, first, above all. And those who resist efforts to restore order in the name of justice are consigning the urban poor, the vast majority of whom obey the law, to a Hobbesian fate as victims of the incorrigibly violent among them.

—Jack Beatty





*Nancy Belsky
uses kites to teach her
students important
math skills.*



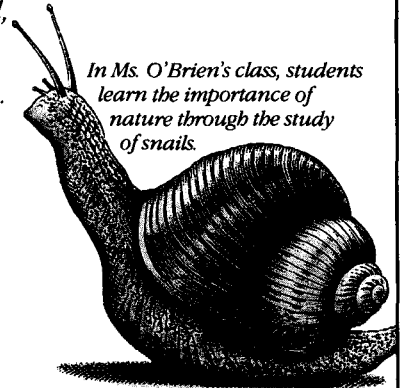
*By using layer cookies
and nuts, Mrs. Williams's
students
learn how sedimentary rocks
form in strata.*

KITES,

*These six enterprising teachers,
from kindergarten through high school,
have found a better way to help
further the cause of quality education.*

SNAILS

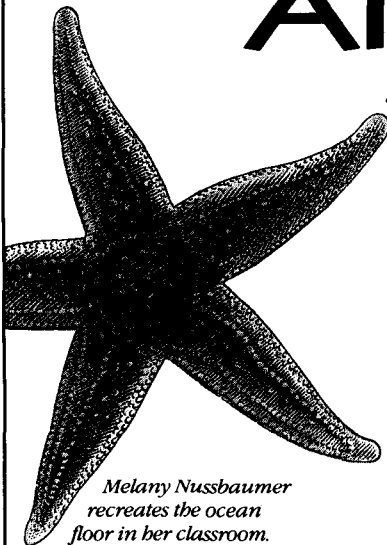
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*In Ms. O'Brien's class, students
learn the importance of
nature through the study
of snails.*

AND BOATS

*State Farm makes a donation of \$5,000
in each teacher's name to the
educational institution of their choice.*



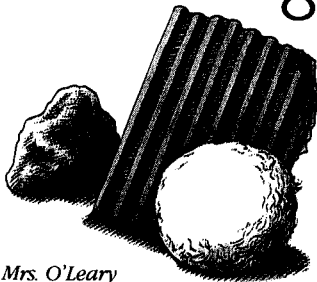
*Melany Nussbaumer
recreates the ocean
floor in her classroom.*

THAT

*These teachers, because of
their innovative thinking, are our most
recent honorees of math and science.*

SAIL...

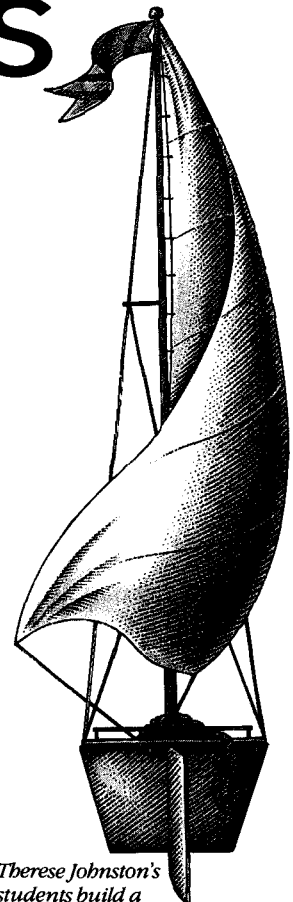
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*Mrs. O'Leary
teaches her students
to rely on their sense of
touch to identify objects like
cotton, cardboard and rocks.*



Good Neighbor Award



*Therese Johnston's
students build a
two-masted schooner as
part of their science class.*

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Paying lip service to democracy: President Mobutu agrees to share power, September, 1991

ZAIRE

An African Horror Story

Observers search for a suitable analogy—the next Bosnia, another Somalia—to the shaky, predatory despotism of Mobutu Sese Seko Kuku wa za Banga

IN THE CONVOLUTED history of Central Africa, the southern Zairean province of Shaba has long been a magnet for mercenaries and swindlers, a center of bloodstained intrigue. Belgian colonizers first exploited Shaba's rich deposits of copper at the turn of the century, in what came to be called the Belgian Congo—the richest European colony in Africa, Conrad's "Heart of Darkness." In 1960, when the colony achieved independence, the short-lived secession of the province, then known as Katanga, helped make the Congo a byword for postcolonial chaos and savagery—and also black Africa's first Cold War battleground. It was here, in the provincial capital Elisabethville (now Lubumbashi), that the charismatic nationalist Patrice Lumumba was famously martyred in 1961, with the connivance of the Central Intelligence Agency and a thirty-year-old

Congolese colonel who would soon become President of the country, Joseph-Désiré Mobutu.

Two rebel invasions of Katanga, in 1977 and 1978, brought Belgian, French, and Moroccan troops to President Mobutu's rescue, many of them ferried by U.S. planes. These episodes cemented Mobutu's position as an utterly dependent but indispensable asset to the West. In the 1980s Shaba emerged as a key strategic outpost for the Reagan Doctrine. Reportedly, the CIA used an airstrip in the remote Shaban town of Kamina in order to channel covert weapons into neighboring Angola. President Reagan hailed Mobutu as "a voice of good sense and good will."

So it is no surprise that Shaba has emerged as a flash point in one of the great unfolding dramas of the post-Cold War era: Mobutu's struggle to remain in power. He is one of the last five-star despots of the Cold War era: Mobutu Sese Seko Kuku wa za Banga, as he is now called—which translates as "the all-powerful warrior who, because of his endurance and inflexible will to win, will go from conquest to conquest leaving fire in his wake." Buffeted by history's changing winds, bereft of his Western backing, embattled by riotous troops and pro-democracy forces, and squeezed for cash to keep afloat his notoriously greedy regime, Mobutu was being tested as never before when I visited Shaba recently, in search of clues to

his survival. Despite mounting anarchy and economic chaos, Mobutu was confounding widespread predictions of his imminent demise. I wanted to know how he did it.

"Ethnic cleansing" was the term that Zaireans, diplomats, and aid workers used to explain the cramming of tens of thousands of hungry and destitute citizens into and around two fly-strewn railway stations in the mining towns of Likasi and Kolwezi. They were refugees in their own country, evidence that the time-honored practice of "divide and rule" had been effectively executed. Thumbs were rubbed against forefingers to explain the officially sanctioned looting of the vital state-owned mining installation in Kolwezi, where soldiers, politicians, and all manner of foreign hustlers were operating a none-too-subtle traffic in stolen copper and cobalt and whatever else might earn a few hundred trillion hyperdeflated cash zaires.

Three years after Mobutu first promised to share power, amid a wave of popular euphoria over the news of tumbling regimes in Eastern Europe ("Ceaușescu! Mobutu! Ceaușescu! Mobutu!" they chanted in the streets of Kinshasa), he seems bent on dismembering the country before the country dismembers him. Talk of the big man's faltering grip, rife in Kinshasa and abroad, had long since ceased in Shaba. "It's important to know that Mobutu is a great strategist," I was told. "He has his ways and means."

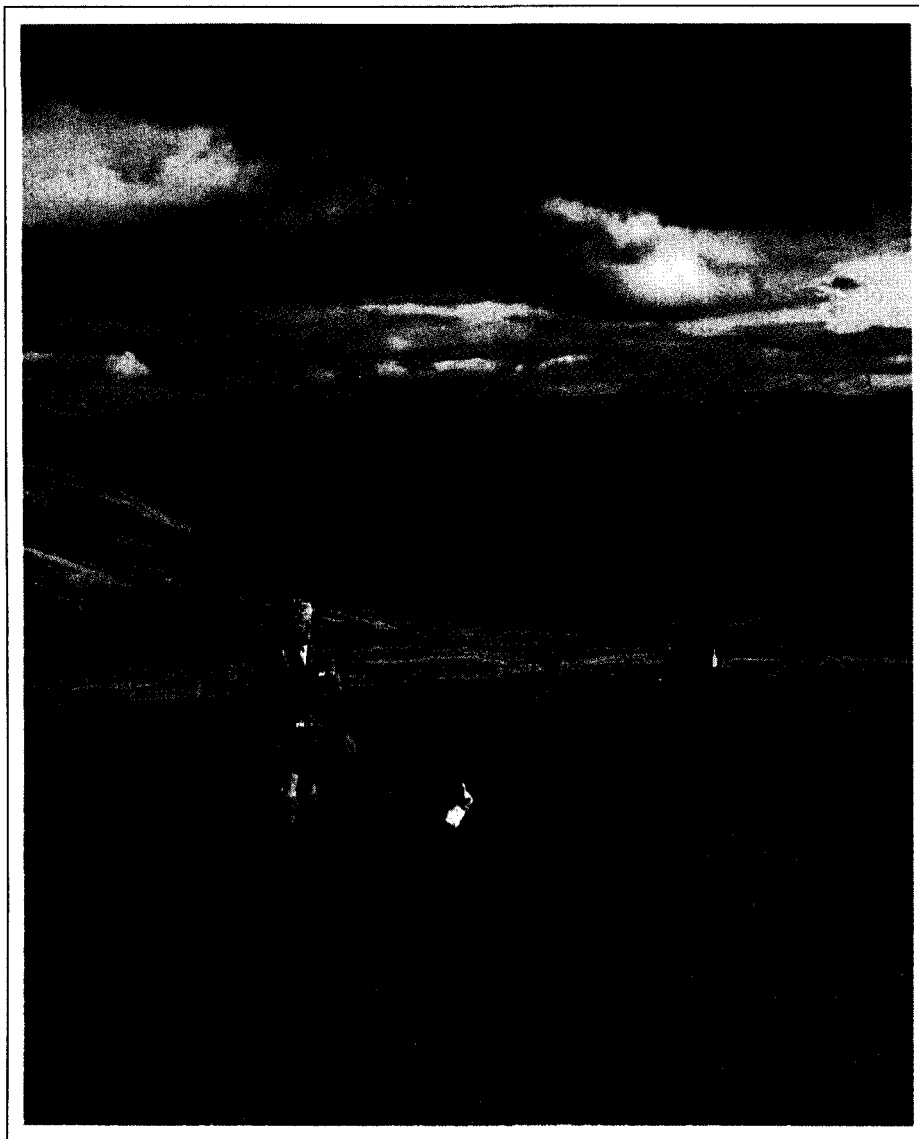
THE TRAIN STATION in downtown Likasi, a two-hour drive northwest of Lubumbashi, is a crumbling edifice built by the Belgians early in this century. It was part of the sprawling network of rails and roads that linked the Central African copper belt to ports in South Africa and the former Portuguese colonies of Mozambique and Angola. In more prosperous days a substantial portion of the world's copper and cobalt was produced in this part of the world.

Today the station is surrounded by a dense warren of shanties, a maze of burlap and plastic slung over rickety frames fashioned from scrap wood and rusty bedsprings. Across the tracks and beyond a foot-wide open sewer, row upon row of green plastic tents, constructed by Belgian workers from the relief agency Médecins Sans Frontières,



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Sandy Milne and trusty companion, Ambrose.

His Majesty was gracing Scotland with a state visit at the time. He brought with him a powerful thirst for The Glenlivet single malt Scotch.

As his host's daughter, Elizabeth Grant, recorded in her memoirs: “Lord Corynham, the Chamberlain, was looking everywhere for the pure Glenlivet whisky: the King drank nothing else.”

A bottle was swiftly brought up from the cellar and pressed into the king's hands. “What is not recorded,” says our own Sandy Milne, “is whether His Majesty gave anyone else a sniff of the stuff.”



What is a single malt Scotch?

A single malt is Scotch the way it was originally: one single whisky, from one single distillery. Not, like most Scotch today, a blend of many whiskies. The Glenlivet single malt Scotch whisky should therefore be compared to a château-bottled wine. Blended Scotch is more like a mixture of wines from different vineyards.

**The Glenlivet.
The Father of All Scotch.**

extend to the distant horizon. Each tent is crammed with as many as fourteen men, women, and children. The air is filled with the smells of rot and excrement, and with the cacophonous din of scrap metal being pounded into makeshift pots and pans. Five hours west an equally grim scene is unfolding in Kolwezi. The sidewalks there are piled high with desks, bureaus, sofas, cabinets, and other household goods, all for sale to whoever will buy them. Before relief groups moved in to provide vaccinations and running water, sixty people a day were dying from measles, dysentery, malaria, and respiratory infections.

In both towns the refugees are Kasaians, primarily Lubas, born and raised in Shaba but descended from ancestors who were recruited to the mines from the neighboring province of Kasai. Over the past year, in the worst wave of ethnic violence in the region since the Katangan secession of 1960, more than 100,000 Kasaians have been chased from their jobs and homes by rampaging mobs of indigenous Shabans—or “Katangese,” as they call themselves. Most Kasaians have congregated at the train stations of Kolwezi and Likasi in the probably futile hope that one of the infrequent trains will have enough space in its sweltering boxcars to take them and their families away to Kasai at a price they can afford. “We cannot stay, because they will cut our throats,” I was told.

The plight of the Kasai in Shaba is

less the result of age-old hatreds than of the machinations of government leaders bent on preserving their power. To be sure, there is a history of enmity between the Katangese and their generally better-educated, more successful Kasaians. The Lubas of Kasai have sometimes considered themselves the “Jews of Africa.” They predominate among the country’s intellectuals, professionals, and entrepreneurs. The Belgians cultivated them as laborers and administrators of the colonial order. Their families were housed by the mining companies; their children were educated in company-built schools and made ready to percolate up through even the most oppressive regimes both before and since independence. Resentment on the part of the Katangese has grown accordingly.

“The Kasai are seen as instruments of oppression—on this all Katangese agree,” Muyembe wa Banze, a Katangan executive at Gecamines, the state-owned mining giant, told me. “They seemed to be more attached to the white man—that’s what we have seen. They have come from far away and have all the advantages. You’ll see that the important positions in society are filled by Kasaians. Mobutu has used the Kasai to oppress the Katangese.”

Yet in Zaire it has been only at times of great political upheaval and insecurity, such as now, that resentment has turned to terror. What is striking about the current campaign against the Kasai

is how President Mobutu, fighting for his political survival, has managed to exploit well-founded bitterness toward his own rapacious regime by deflecting it onto others.

ON APRIL 24, 1990, Mobutu declared an end to single-party rule and the beginning of a transition to democracy. The Berlin Wall had recently fallen, and the Cold War was winding down. Mobutu’s Western backers—the United States, France, and Belgium—had let him know that the years of reliable support were over. This, together with mounting strikes and protests in Kinshasa and elsewhere, compelled Mobutu to open a “sovereign national conference” to prepare for democratic rule. Opposition leaders returned from exile. Opposition parties proliferated. A raucous public debate enlivened newspapers long subdued by fear.

But problems quickly materialized—not least in Shaba. Barely two weeks after Mobutu’s declaration unidentified commandos went on a nighttime rampage on the campus of the University of Lubumbashi, killing a still-unconfirmed number of students. There followed a spate of armed attacks on the homes of prominent opposition figures. Opposition rallies were broken up. Arrests and killings multiplied. Transition governments came and went. More than 200 mutually antagonistic political parties entered the fray, many backed with enough cash from Mobutu himself to compound hyperinflation.

Then came the “pillage.” In September of 1991 an astonishing week-long spree of looting and destruction by underpaid troops of the national army laid waste to major cities across the country. More than 200 people were killed. Much of the modern productive sector of the economy was destroyed. The sidewalks next to major military bases became thriving markets for looted goods. Most press accounts described these horrendous riots as the work of “mutinous” troops. But whether the pillage was aimed at toppling Mobutu remains a mystery; no soldier was ever prosecuted or disciplined.

Meanwhile, the major opposition parties had managed to form a coalition called the Union Sacrée de l’Opposition. Its candidate to lead the transition to democracy was a well-known activist named Étienne Tshisekedi. Tshisekedi is from Kasai. After the pillage Mobutu



Shaba, 1992: Egged on by the Mobutu-appointed governor, Katangese rout Kasaians



met with the Union Sacrée and, remarkably, agreed to allow the formation of an opposition government led by Tshisekedi, who was sworn in as Prime Minister on October 16, 1991. He lasted six days. The problem, like almost all problems in Zaire, boiled down to money. Tshisekedi, with the backing of Western governments, sought control over Zaire's Central Bank. This Mobutu could not abide. Control of the printing and distribution of money is a vital tool of Mobutu's; it is not only the means by which he enriches himself but also his means for supporting his friends and co-opting his enemies. When Tshisekedi arrived at his office on October 19, 1991, he found the doors were locked. A replacement moved in three days later. Nevertheless, the Union Sacrée continued to have broad popular support. Something needed to be done to break up the opposition alliance. So Mobutu turned to two men from Shaba: Jean Nguza Karl-i-Bond and Gabriel Kyungu wa Kumwanza.

Whenever Zaireans describe Mobutu's legendary "musical chairs" system of government—the perennial shuffling of his friends and enemies in and out of favor, in and out of money—the first case in point is Nguza Karl-i-Bond. Nguza was Mobutu's Foreign Minister in the early 1970s. He then became the political director of Zaire's sole political party, the Mouvement Populaire de la Révolution (MPR). In 1977 he was accused of treason and sentenced to death. He is said to have been tortured. But a year later he was freed, and a year after that he became Prime Minister. Two years after that he fled to exile in Belgium, where he wrote a book exposing Mobutu's corruption. He later testified before a congressional subcommittee in Washington about Mobutu's ill-gotten riches. Then, incredibly, he returned to Mobutu's fold, and in 1986 was sent back to Washington as Zaire's ambassador. Two years later he was the Foreign Minister again.

By 1991 Nguza was out of the loop once more and heading the Union des Fédéralistes et des Républicains Indépendants (UFERI), one of the three main opposition parties in the Union Sacrée. Gabriel Kyungu, one of his principal allies, appeared more credible than Nguza as an oppositionist. Along with Tshisekedi, Kyungu had produced a scathing public critique of Mo-

butu's regime in 1980. The two were imprisoned and tortured. Kyungu was one of the first public figures to decry the massacre of students at the university, and he drew crowds with populist speeches in which he derided Mobutu as an *hibou*, an owl, traditionally associated with black magic.

BUT THAT WAS before November 25, 1991, when UFERI broke ranks with the Union Sacrée. Mobutu appointed Nguza Prime Minister and Kyungu the governor of Shaba. The violence against the Kasai in Shaba began soon thereafter.

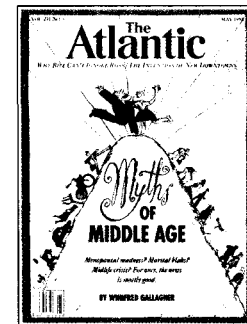
Immediately after Governor Kyungu assumed office, he launched a campaign known as *Debout Katanga!*—"Rise up, Katanga!" Its motto was "Katanga for the Katangese." In a series of public rallies and radio speeches the governor railed against the "enemy within," the Kasai. Bemoaning the misery of the Katangan population, Kyungu repeatedly blamed the Kasaians. He called them *bilulu* (Swahili for "insects"). "The Kasai are foreigners," he declared. "The Katangese no longer accept the Kasai here. Their presence is an insult. They are arrogant and don't hide it. It is not possible for the tribes to live side by side." In crude harangues that would have been familiar to Asians driven from Uganda by Idi Amin, Kyungu derided the Kasai as money-grubbing exploiters who were lucky to be allowed to flee with their lives. "The Kasai must go and then the Katangese can have the nice jobs and nice houses," he said.

Then, employing a tactic long used by Mobutu, Kyungu established the JUFERI, a youth brigade in his party, as a vigilante force. Mostly unemployed, illiterate thugs from rural villages, the JUFERI provided a violent accompaniment to Kyungu's menacing radio broadcasts. Attacks on Kasaian homes in rural towns and villages began in late 1991. By April of last year the JUFERI, sometimes backed by mobs of other Katangese, were systematically expelling Kasaians from their homes. Witnesses said the JUFERI were sometimes supplied with gasoline to set houses afire and with beer and marijuana to stoke their aggression. Some Kasaians fought back. The proverbial cycle of violence was set in motion.

Meanwhile, on February 16, 1992, hundreds of thousands of people

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marched through the streets of Kinshasa, a thousand miles away, in support of the national conference on democracy, which Nguza had ordered closed. Mobutu's troops opened fire on the marchers; according to the human-rights monitoring group Africa Watch, more than thirty were killed. Mobutu deftly blamed Nguza and soon afterward allowed the national conference to resume. In August the conference nominated Tshisekedi to be Prime Minister again. Kasaian in Shaba celebrated. Reportedly, some marched through the streets of Lubumbashi with leashed dogs that wore ties and signs saying NGUZA. Some threw stones at the governor's residence. The JUFERI, armed with knives and machetes, responded predictably.

Most Kasaian fled to the train station or to the homes of relatives in town. Those I spoke with had no doubt about who was ultimately responsible for their predicament. "It's Mobutu," one of their leaders asserted (few Kasaian were willing to be identified by name). "As President of the Republic, he can't lower himself into the streets to wage war against the Kasai. He needs someone who is malleable. He uses others, like Kyungu—a pawn of Mobutu."

Kasaian were quick to remind me that not all Katangese approve of what is happening: "It's a false problem," I was told repeatedly; "it's a manipulation by the politicians." Nevertheless, Nguza and Kyungu have plainly tapped a real vein of resentment. "Monsieur Kyungu expresses the profound aspirations, the soul of the people," Tshibang Kadjat, a Katangan executive at the mining company Gecamines, told me. "From colonization to Mobutu, all the advantages go to the Kasai."

In fact the majority of Kasaian in Shaba have suffered as much as most Katangese under a regime that has plundered the province's resources for the benefit of a few. But Katangan leaders have made a pact with the devil, calculating that, as one put it, "we have to ally ourselves with the finishing dictatorship in order to resist the permanent dictatorship of the Kasai."

"You know," a Kasaian prosecutor in Kolwezi told me over dinner, "Mobutu is the kind of politician who can profit from any situation to maintain his power. Before, he attacked the Katangese using the Kasai, who were among his closest collaborators. Now he realizes

that there were radical political oppositionists among the Kasai. He uses old enmities to destabilize his new enemies. Now he uses Katangese to destabilize the Kasai."

A judge interrupted to clarify: "It was not exactly his goal to dominate the Katangese. Mobutu put Kasaian at the head of many enterprises. But this was so that he could enjoy the riches of the province with the help of the Kasai. Now he says it wasn't he who was the cause of the Katangese's unhappiness—it was the Kasai. If you look at the situation more closely, both Kasaian and Katangese are in indescribable misery. Those who benefited are Mobutu and his acolytes. It's just that most of his acolytes were Kasaian, especially here in Katanga. This is a region that he has pillaged a lot."

Soldiers and the police, who might be expected to intervene if Mobutu ordered them to do so, appear in accounts of the violence only intermittently, most often as criminals engaged in thefts and assaults that provoke reprisals, which merely reinforce the cycle of violence. Lawlessness in general, and lawless soldiers in particular, have been a chronic problem in Zaire ever since independence, when the entire army dissolved in mutiny within a week. Armed shakedowns are commonplace. On a single night in Kolwezi, while driving to and from a restaurant in town, my companions and I were held up at gunpoint five times by soldiers who emerged like apparitions in our headlights, pointed their rifles menacingly at the windshield, and then gruffly accepted yet another proffer of five or ten million zaires—just under a dollar at that week's rate.

The UFERI mayor of Kolwezi, P. Anschaire Moji A Kapasu, told me that the authorities had done "everything possible" to stop the violence. I asked if anyone had been arrested and prosecuted. He looked at me with a blank expression, as if the idea had never occurred to him. "It's difficult in the mass of people to know who struck who," he said. "You would have to arrest the whole population. *C'est difficile*."

ON THE EDGE of downtown Kolwezi, past the teeming train station, lies the Gecamines mining installation, a vast, rocky landscape of open pits and copper waste dumps. In better days this facility produced up to

80 percent of Zaire's copper and cobalt. Belgians built the mines early in the century, and Belgian spies, financiers, and mercenaries known as *les Affreux*—"the Dreadful Ones"—backed Moise Tshombe's ill-fated secession movement in 1960, hoping to maintain de facto Belgian control over the lucrative mining industry. Mobutu nationalized the mines in 1967. At its high point, in the mid-1980s, Gecamines produced 480,000 tons of copper a year with 35,000 employees, earned three quarters of Zaire's foreign exchange, and educated 100,000 children in company-run schools.

Today Gecamines is eerily subdued. A half dozen tense young JUFERI members in jeans and sport shirts guard the entrance against Kasaian. In the two weeks before my visit roughly 7,000 Kasaian workers—half the work force and most of the skilled employees—had been chased from their jobs at these mines. In all, 40,000 to 50,000 Kasaian in Kolwezi have been rendered homeless. The mines still function, I was told, but expatriate company officials doubt that this will last. The production of copper had already declined to 150,000 tons or less in the previous year, because of rampant corruption and mismanagement. A mine collapsed a few years ago owing to negligence. Most of the skilled expatriates fled after the 1991 *pillage*. The company is bankrupt.

A week before my visit ten trucks lined up along the wall surrounding the plant. Three hundred thieves pushed a hundred tons of copper up to the wall and loaded it into the trucks, and off they drove to the Zambian border and down to South Africa. There is an ongoing traffic in stolen copper, cobalt, electrical wires and pylons, tires, water pumps, and gasoline. Gecamines is being looted down to the ground. Soldiers, the police, workers, company guards, expatriate Greeks, Lebanese, and South Africans—all are collaborating to ransack Zaire's biggest economic asset.

According to company officials, legal authorities, diplomats, and townspeople alike, at the center of the racket is Governor Kyungu. He is said to be getting a \$10,000 kickback for each export license granted to truck goods across the border. It is an old story in Zaire. "Who's using who?" a clergyman asked. "Is Mobutu using Kyungu, or is Kyungu using Mobutu? We ask ourselves this question. If



Kasaian refugees in Likasi. Mobutu's skill at exploiting ethnic resentments helps assure his continued political survival

you compare Kyungu when he was in opposition, he was a poor man. Now he is very rich."

THE CORRUPTION in Zaire is legendary. The "kleptocracy" has its roots in the nineteenth-century Congo Free State: Belgium's King Leopold II used profits from the export of the country's extensive natural resources to build a personal fortune—profits extracted under conditions of forced labor that included killing workers and chopping off hands if quotas were not met. Mobutu's ill-gotten wealth is usually estimated at around \$5 billion. Stories about his bank accounts in Switzerland and his villas, ranches, palaces, and yachts throughout Europe are legion, as are wide-eyed descriptions of his home at Gbadolite, in northern Zaire, his birthplace; "Versailles in the jungle," it is called.

Born in poverty, the son of a domestic cook and a hotel maid, Mobutu is reported to have obtained his first few million dollars in the early 1960s from

the CIA and the U.S.-dominated UN peacekeeping force that put down the Katangan secession. He was the army chief of staff at the time. Mobutu has steadily augmented his wealth ever since by blurring the distinction between public and private funds, dipping often into the national treasury. Not least among his many lucrative sources of "leakage," as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund call illegal diversions of money, has been Gecamines. By 1980 it was estimated that officials were skimming off at least \$240 million a year from the nationalized resource. More recently a World Bank investigation estimated that up to \$400 million—a fourth of Zaire's export revenues, most of it earned from Gecamines—inexplicably vanished from the country's foreign-exchange accounts in 1988.

Sometimes overlooked in accounts of Mobutu's wealth is the critical role that money plays as a political tool. Even as Mobutu has accumulated great riches, he has had to spend huge

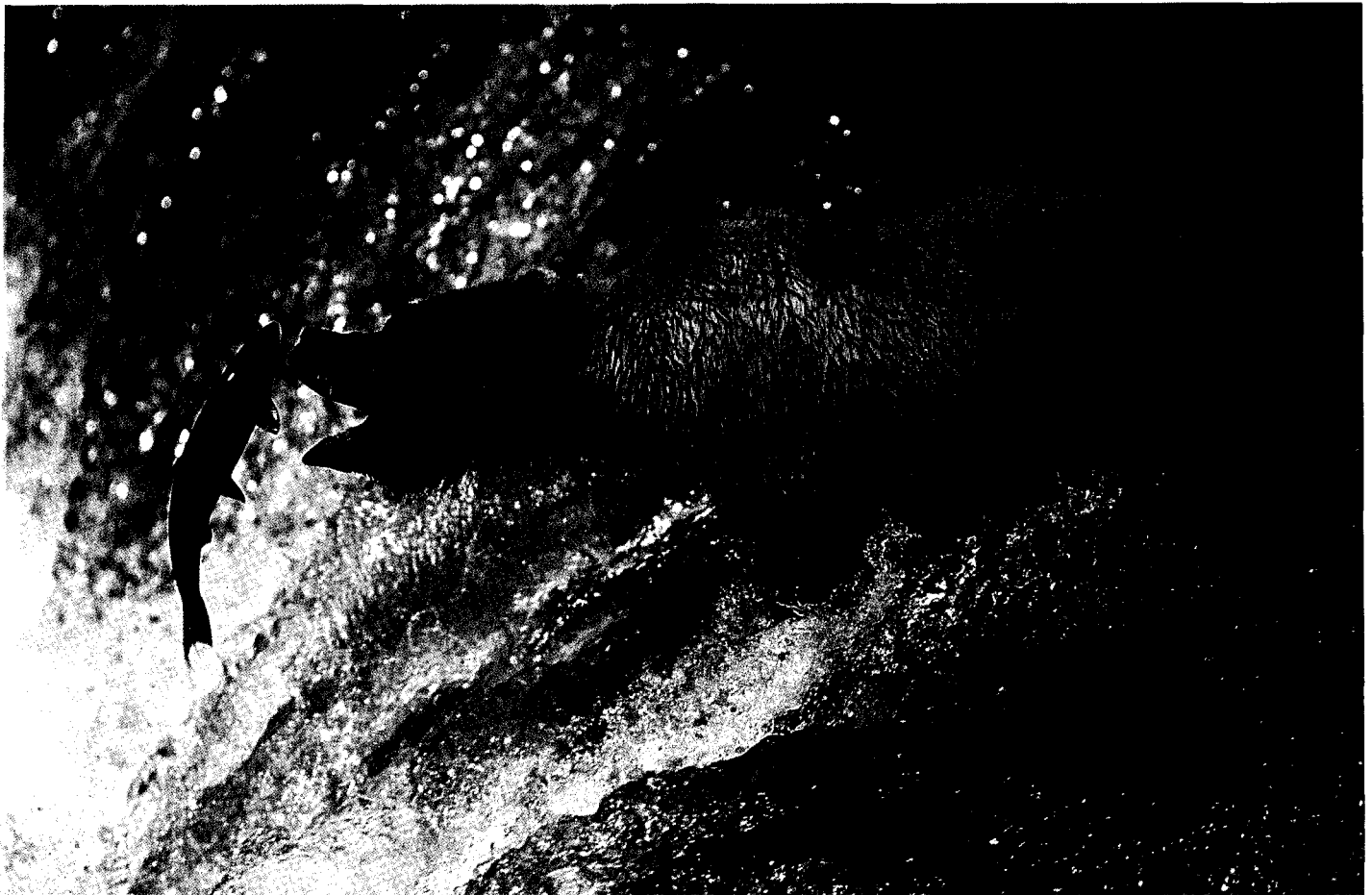
sums to reward his allies and buy off his opponents. The word on the street in Kinshasa, impossible to confirm but relayed to me by a diplomatic source who found it credible, is that Mobutu paid Nguza \$10 million to break with the Union Sacrée and become Prime Minister. "It's like the Mafia," a Zairean lawyer said. "All Zairean politicians are poor. For survival they have to engage in politics. To earn a living, they have to be on the side of the man in power."

Herman Cohen, who was the assistant secretary of state for African affairs in the Bush Administration, and who first met Mobutu almost thirty years ago, agreed when we spoke that Zaire's central government is "basically a clan, a family of cousins acting like the Mafia in Sicily, making these illegal deals, siphoning the money off cobalt and copper revenues." Cohen added, "Mobutu requires a huge cash flow. He has to keep the family afloat. In effect he has about three thousand to four thousand dependents, including women and chil-

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dren. It's essentially his own tribe. The attitude is, 'We've got to all hang together. If we don't, we're dead.'"

Among the most important of these dependents are, of course, soldiers. A certain amount of cash has to be on hand for them. When money is tight, as it often is now that the economy is in ruins, Mobutu's tendency has been simply to print more. Hyperinflation generally follows. This was the result last January, when Mobutu tried to meet his military payroll by introducing new five-million-zaire notes into circulation, worth about \$2 each at the time. The opposition, led by Tshisekedi, feared yet another round of hyperinflation, and urged shopkeepers to refuse to accept them. The strategy worked. The soldiers found they were unable to spend their money. So they went on another *pillage*, looting Kinshasa even more viciously and destructively than they had in 1991. This time Mobutu's elite troops intervened, grabbing their share and then summarily executing hundreds of rank-and-file looters. Nevertheless, the newly printed notes were effectively barred from use—everywhere, that is, except in Mobutu's home province of Equateur and in Shaba, where Governor Kyungu successfully coerced businesses into accepting them. Prices took off. The black-market value of zaires, 2.5 million to the dollar in Kinshasa in April, went from 12 million to 24 million to the dollar in Lubumbashi during the first two weeks of that month.

There remains the question of why Mobutu tolerates the gutting of Gecamines, a pillar of the economy and an indispensable source of foreign exchange. The answer is diamonds. By all accounts, Mobutu has managed to work out an alternative racket involving the export of diamonds from Kasai. Zaire is one of the world's largest producers of diamonds. Last year recorded diamond exports came to \$230 million. Unrecorded exports? "Anybody's guess," a diplomat told me, "but certainly larger, by a substantial margin." Reportedly, an array of mostly Lebanese diamond buyers, working with silent partners in the Central Bank and in the military, are reaping hefty profits in a complex foreign-exchange scam involving a parallel market in checks worth as much as forty times the official exchange rate. They bring in their foreign currency, exchange it for zaires with their silent partners, and then head for the dia-

mond mines. The proceeds leaving the back door of the Central Bank are keeping afloat Mobutu's extended "family" of relatives, elite troops, ethnic kinsmen, and followers. So Gecamines may be expendable.

THE LOSERS IN all this, needless to say, are the long-suffering Zairean people. Last year inflation soared to more than 6,000 percent. Unemployment is at 80 percent. Gross domestic product has by some estimates been contracting by as much as 30 percent a year since the *pillage*. Hospitals and schools have repeatedly shut down. Teachers in Likasi had been on strike for more than a month when I was there; their average monthly salary of 30 million zaires was worth four bottles of beer. Many Zaireans eat just one meal a day, some only one every other day. The public-service sector has largely stopped functioning. Tax collection has ceased—except for the "direct taxation" of army shakedowns. The country's banking system has all but collapsed. The nation of nearly 40 million, four times the geographic size of France, is heading deeper into anarchy by the day.

Yet it is precisely these conditions that have made Mobutu's tactics effective. Most Zaireans see a method in his seeming madness, a deliberate strategy of destabilization as a means of discrediting the movement toward democracy and undermining the capacity of the people to mobilize against him. "Mobutu tries to keep the population in fear," a lawyer in Kolwezi told me. "The population is traumatized. Mobutu wants to keep them in this position for a long time. That's how he maintains his position."

Foreigners living in Zaire often marvel at the "passivity" of the Zairean people; one I spoke to speculated about a version of the "battered-woman syndrome." But Zaireans point out that Mobutu and his allies still have all the guns and all the money. Hundreds of thousands of people marched in Kinshasa, they reminded me, and more than thirty of them were shot dead. In any event, a clergyman said, "when the population is hungry and tired, it doesn't have the energy to go into the streets."

A U.S. State Department paper of earlier this year raised the specter of Zaire's becoming "Somalia and Liberia

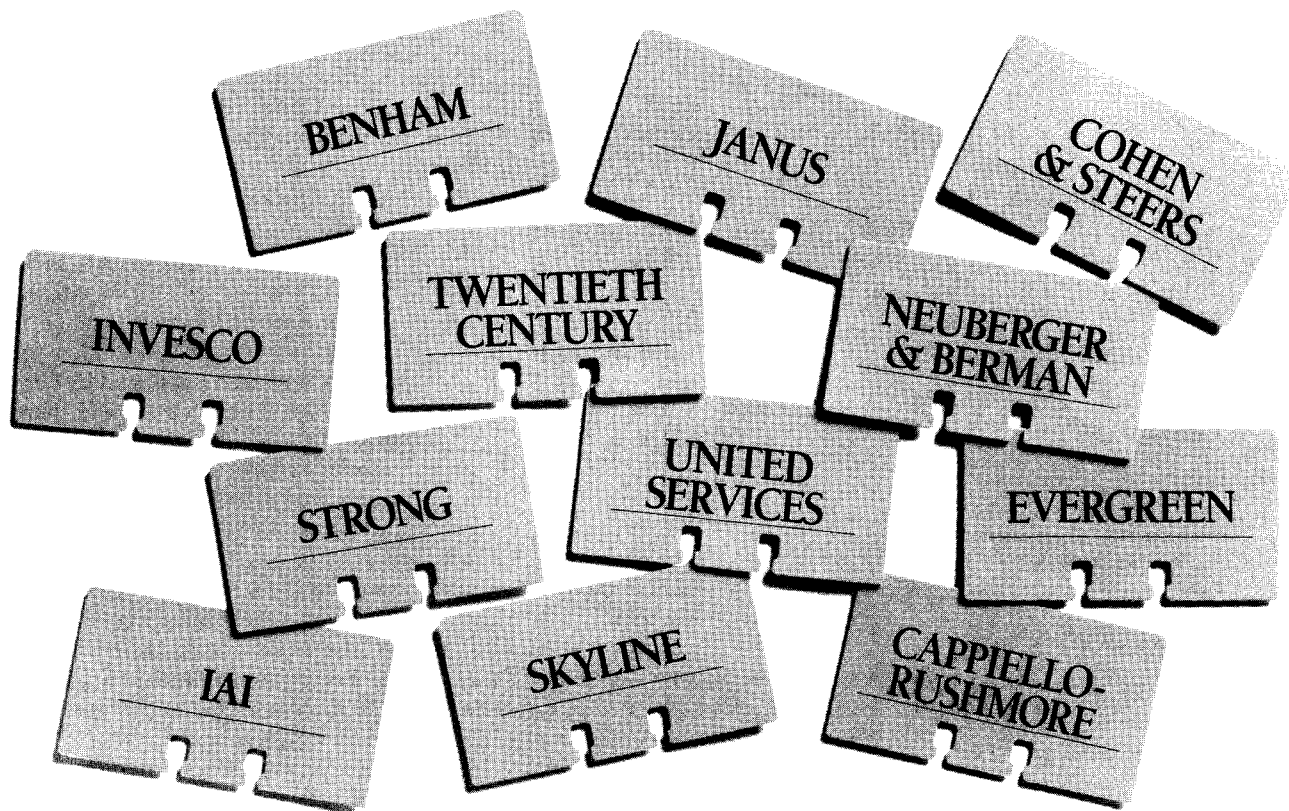
rolled into one, with vast potential for immense refugee flows, regional destabilization, and humanitarian disaster." Whether Zaire is headed down that path is far from certain. The country is not armed to the teeth as Somalia was, and it is blessed with a lush tropical climate that makes widespread famine less likely. Moreover, the country is so huge and diffuse—Shaba alone is nearly the size of France—that it lacks the implosive potential of Liberia, where the importation of large quantities of arms touched off a conflagration that consumed the entire country in less than a year. What does seem clear is that the longer Mobutu's strategy of progressive disintegration lasts, the more widespread and irreversible will be the forces of anarchy. Already reports of "ethnic cleansing" much like those from Shaba are emerging from the northeastern region of Kivu.

That is why many Zaireans are in favor of foreign intervention. A Katangan executive at Gecamines put it this way: "The West and the United States have a moral obligation vis-à-vis Africa. At the time of the Cold War, the West and the United States produced dictators. They armed them. They organized coups. Now that the Cold War is finished, the West has a moral obligation to get rid of the dictators of Africa. When they created these dictators, they didn't ask for the advice of the African people."

The American policy-makers I have spoken with are clearly at a loss about what should be done. "The solution is not obvious," I was told. Armed United Nations intervention to support an election process—the solution favored by Tshisekedi and many other Zaireans—would be unsalable in the United States even if it were feasible. The strategy of nudging the transition process from the sidelines has withered under Mobutu's endlessly subversive machinations. All along there has been concern that if Mobutu could somehow be extracted from the scene, his departure would create a vacuum into which the soldiers left behind would rush, with frightful results. By this line of argument, Mobutu has stoked the forces of anarchy to such a degree that he has made himself indispensable as a means of controlling them. *Après moi, le déluge*, he has implied for thirty years. At this late date he may be right.

—Bill Berkeley

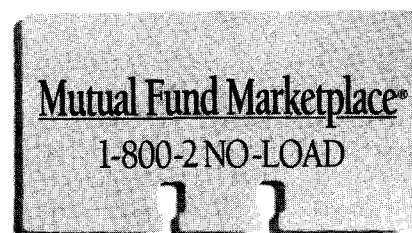
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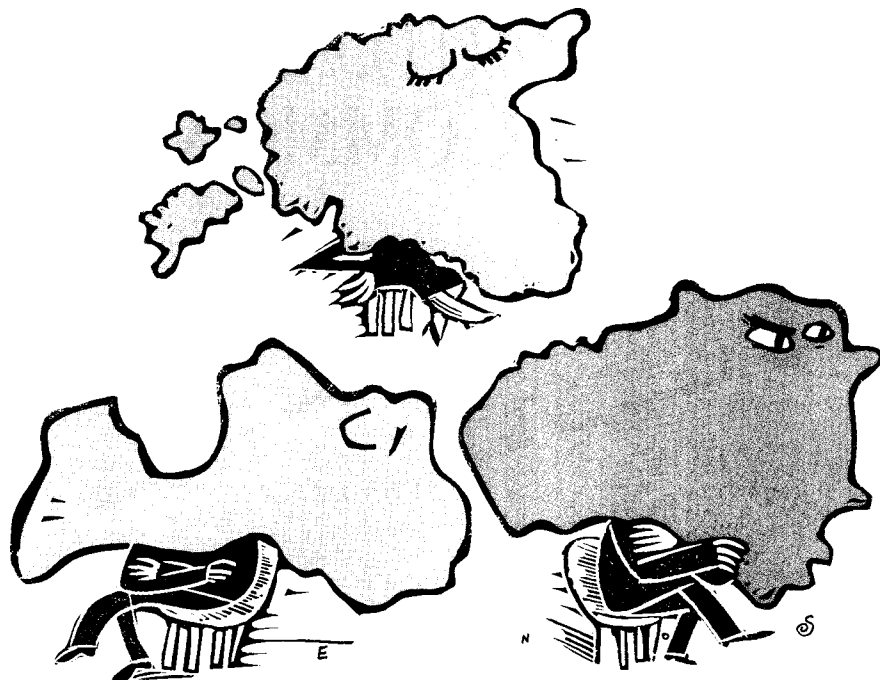
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DIPLOMACY

Cleansing Ethnic Hatred

A psychoanalyst who grew up in a country riven by nationalist conflicts is trying to help feuding groups understand the emotional history of their hatred

IN APRIL of this year, when a psychoanalyst named Vamik Volkan convened a therapeutic conference of Russians and Balts, he was challenging dogma handed down by the founder of his profession. In 1932 Albert Einstein had written a letter to Sigmund Freud asking about the potential for precisely the kind of ethnic healing that Volkan meant to attempt. By then Einstein might have envisioned the destructive power that physics was about to place in humanity's hands. He knew that totalitarians had come to power in Italy and Russia and were threatening to do so in Germany. So he asked Freud whether psychoanalysis, which seemed to be probing the human soul in much the same way that Einstein and his fellow physicists were probing the atom, could devise a kind of vaccination to prevent the horror he could foresee. "Is it possible," he wrote, "to so guide the

psychological development of man that it becomes resistant to the psychoses of hatred and destruction?"

Freud's reply can be summed up in two words: No way. Men make war because it feels good, Freud wrote Einstein. Killing one's enemies gratifies a fundamental aggressive instinct. That instinct will not go away, and Freud saw no sense in wishing that it would. "Why are we, you and I and so many others, so indignant about war? Why don't we accept it as we do so many other painful calamities of life? It seems to be a natural occurrence, biologically well-founded and . . . scarcely avoidable."

No doubt because of his pessimistic view of human nature, Freud hardly bothered to consider the challenge implicit in Einstein's question—that of adapting psychotherapeutic techniques designed for individuals to the arena of international and ethnic relations. Keeping the peace, he told Einstein, was a problem for statesmen, not psychoanalysts. The best mankind could hope for was an international body with real police powers—the candidate at the time was the League of Nations—that would step in and stop conflicts.

Many wars, one Holocaust, and several bouts of ethnic cleansing later, Freud's letter to Einstein by and large continues to define the division of labor in peace-keeping endeavors. Psychotherapists learn to help people individually or in small groups. The prevention of war and ethnic violence remains the domain

of politicians and diplomats. But the Clinton Administration, dismayed by the prospect of coping with endless Yugoslavias in the old Soviet bloc, has announced that it is looking for new methods of "preventive diplomacy." And that has stimulated interest in the work of a few psychoanalysts who refuse to accept the limits set by Freud. One of these is Vamik Volkan.

VOLKAN, A TALL, cheerful man with a mop of curly white hair and a bristling moustache, came by his interest in ethnic strife as naturally as Freud developed his interest in the neuroses of Viennese women with overbearing fathers. Volkan grew up on Cyprus, an island populated by Greeks and Turks. Though everyone there at the time was a British subject, Volkan, from a Turkish family, could see how stubbornly people clung to their ethnic identities. Turkish men wore red sashes, the color of the Turkish flag, and smoked cigarettes that came in red packages. Greek men wore blue sashes, the color of the Greek flag, and smoked cigarettes from blue packages.

In the towns the two groups lived in mixed neighborhoods, and the British presence imposed a superficial harmony. But as a child Volkan felt a constant undercurrent of conflicting emotions. He took violin lessons in an Orthodox church, but he also heard rumors that each knot in the priest's cincture stood for a Muslim child the priest had strangled. He was told to stop playing with the Greek girl next door when they reached puberty. Volkan left the island in 1957 to study psychiatry in the United States. Three years later the British gave Cyprus its independence, and the two communities soon clashed, ostensibly over the political issue of union with Greece. But in this, too, Volkan saw the force of underlying emotions. One of the first things the pro-union side did was storm and capture a Turkish redoubt with a high minaret. Then they knocked the minaret down, an act that enraged the island's Turkish men.

Volkan became an American citizen and a professor of psychiatry at the University of Virginia, but he never stopped thinking about Cyprus and his childhood memories of ethnic tension, which his psychoanalytic training illuminated. He eventually published his ideas in a book, *The Need to Have Enemies and Allies*. Volkan believes that the

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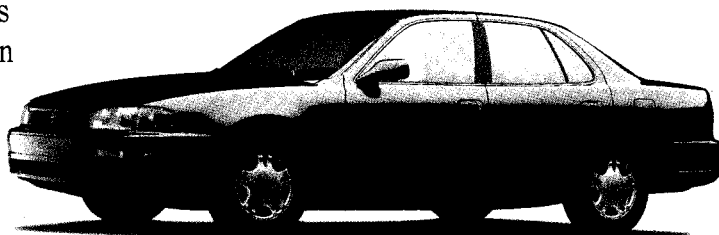
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roots of ethnic hostility lie in the infantile need to externalize unwelcome self-images. A toddler, for instance, may stumble clumsily and then say that his stupid teddy bear fell down. In many societies a community's ethnic rival serves much the same function, becoming the target of individuals' projected guilt and self-loathing. Many ethnic conflicts, of course, originate in real evil committed by one or both sides. But the underlying emotional dynamic assures that the hatred can last many generations longer than the harm that created it.

This tendency is exacerbated when a group suffers a national tragedy that it cannot adequately mourn. Volkan believes that nations, like individuals, must complete a mourning process in order to recover from a traumatic loss. The process requires dwelling on the history of the loss. It requires that neighbors, particularly the one that inflicted the loss, acknowledge what happened and act contrite. It involves building monuments that serve as receptacles for national grief, like the Vietnam Memorial in Washington. If something thwarts the mourning process, the trauma festers. Armenians, for instance, have never been able to complete mourning over what they consider the genocide of 1915, because Turkey has never acknowledged that genocide occurred. That feeds the ferocity of the Armenians' present conflict with the Azerbaijanis, who are ethnically Turkish.

Aggravated by economic hardship, a demagogic leader, or both, this combination of an incompletely mourned national trauma and the externalization of guilt and self-loathing can cause members of one group to see members of another as less than fully human. Crimes committed against them are not considered crimes. Thus SS officers could operate crematoria during the day and then dress for dinner and attend symphony performances in the evening. Thus Serbs can shell Bosnian towns and rape Bosnian women and still consider themselves to be defenders of European civilization.

THE REAL TRICK, Volkan and others have realized, is not describing the causes and symptoms of ethnic hatred but devising a treatment. Nations cannot lie down on an analyst's couch. Nor can their lead-

ers, few of whom, in any case, consider themselves in need of treatment. The problem calls for some kind of group therapy, but with whom? Where? For how long? And in what language?

The method that Volkan and his colleagues are developing is a hybrid of group therapy, diplomatic conference, and academic seminar. It brings together not the top political leaders of feuding groups but several dozen influential members of their elites: legislators, academics, writers, lawyers. Volkan cannot propose to work with them indefinitely, as a therapist might; in fact, the words "treatment" and "therapy" are never heard. Instead the participants gather in an isolated, comfortable setting in or near one of their countries for a conference of three or four days. Once there, they work in small groups, analogous to therapy groups. Volkan and his colleagues encourage them to speak openly about their emotions. Only after the airing of emotions does he try to steer the conference back toward ideas about settling political issues. He hopes that if nothing else, he can make every participant see the members of the other group as human beings and thereby forestall the final and most malignant state of ethnic hatred—war.

In 1988 Volkan received a grant from the Massey Foundation and founded the Center for the Study of Mind and Human Interaction at the University of Virginia. He began focusing on the ethnic tensions in the Soviet Union. By last year, with additional grants from The Pew Charitable Trusts and the United States Institute of Peace, he had begun a series of sessions involving Russians and citizens of the three Baltic nations, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, which broke free of the Soviet Union in 1991. The Baltic region has suffered little violence in the post-Soviet era, at least in comparison with the Caucasus, Moldova, and Central Asia. But the trends are ominous. Latvia and Estonia have contrived, with language laws and residency requirements, to deny citizenship and the right to vote to hundreds of thousands of ethnic Russians, many of them born in the Baltic states. It appears that nationalists in Latvia, where the ethnic Latvians make up a bare majority of the population, are bent on inducing Russians to leave in sufficient numbers to ensure that the Latvian majority is a comfortable one. The Russians, in response,

have announced that they will stop pulling out the troops that remained in Estonia and Latvia after the Soviet Union dissolved.

Symptoms of emotional distress underlie the political disputes. Judging by the numbers and origins of refugees turning up in Moscow, Russians in the Central Asian republics are significantly worse off than those in the Baltic states. But the Russian nationalists and old Soviet apparatchiks in the Supreme Soviet rarely become exercised about Russians in Central Asia, whereas they regularly demand that Russia protect the rights of Russians in the Baltic. This policy seems to be connected to the rage and humiliation the Russians feel at having lost their empire. No Russian needs to be reminded that the Balts seized the first opportunity to turn their backs on Russia and proclaim themselves part of Europe, while the Central Asians were content to remain part of whatever new confederation the Russians devised.

The Balts have their own national traumas to deal with, and they seem adept at dealing with them in ways that infuriate Russians, Jews, and anyone else who is not their own. These days Latvian troops in helmets much like the ones German soldiers wore in the Second World War guard the Freedom Monument in the center of Riga. Latvians gather there on Saturdays with placards urging the Russians in the city to go back to Russia. One sign hoisted recently by an old man implored God to have China do to Russia what Russia did to Latvia. On March 16 the Latvian parliament observed a moment of silence in honor of compatriots who fought the Soviet army as members of the SS's Latvian Legion during the Second World War. The government recently announced plans to disinter Communist officials buried in a place of honor in Riga's national cemetery; many of the remains are Russian. Few things, Volkan has found, so inflame ethnic tension as the disturbance of graves.

WHEN VOLKAN'S April session convened for four days at the House of Science, a mile or so from the Baltic beaches in Jurmala, a string of resort towns outside Riga, the need for preventive therapy was acute. The setting was not entirely auspicious. The House of Science is a grace-

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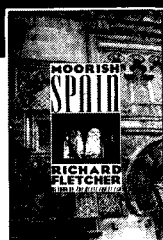
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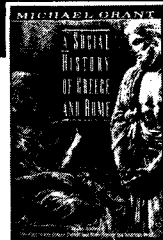
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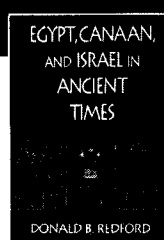
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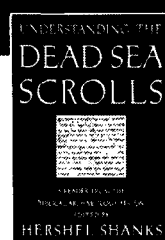
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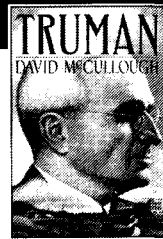
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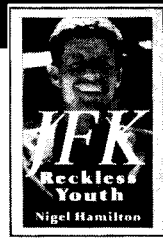
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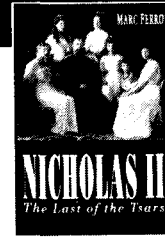
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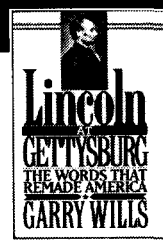
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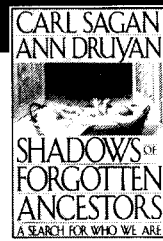
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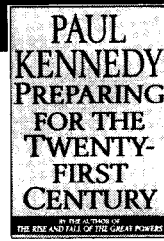
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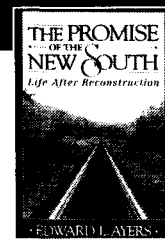
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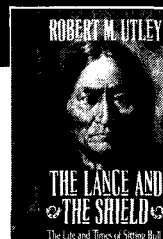
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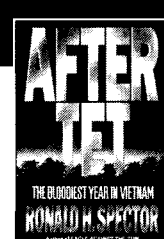
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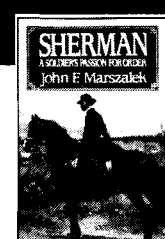
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less twelve-story brick hotel that towers over the pines and surrounding frame cottages. Built during the Soviet period, it cannot but remind Balts of the way the Soviets imposed their alien ideas on an unwilling people. The site, however, was available and inexpensive, and could accommodate forty people. The Baltic delegations consisted of half a dozen parliamentarians (one of whom was also a poet) and assorted historians and psychologists. The Russian government showed its support for Volkan's effort by sending assorted parliamentarians and scholars, its ambassadors to Latvia and Estonia, and the doyenne of its diplomatic corps, Zoya Zarubina, who served as one of Winston Churchill's translators at Yalta. Four therapists, two social scientists, and three retired diplomats, including Harold Saunders, a key participant in the 1978 Camp David negotiations between Israel and Egypt, represented Volkan's center.

In previous ethnic conferences, involving Arabs and Israelis or Russians and Americans, Volkan had noticed an "accordion" effect. The representatives of feuding groups often become emotionally expansive in the act of breaking through the taboo against talking to one another. They become friendly a little too quickly. Then they draw back in fear of the consequences of their intimacy. But there was no danger of premature friendship in Jurmala. The Balts and the Russians knew, or thought they knew,

each other all too well. The delegations came together, for the most part, only when the schedule called for them to.

A therapist might say that the Balts and Russians arrived emotionally well defended. They all grew up in a society where survival and advancement often depended on keeping one's true feelings hidden. Many of them could not lightly abandon that defense simply because a few visiting Americans asked them to. For the first days many of them stubbornly read somnolent prepared papers detailing their history and grievances.

The poet in the group, an Estonian legislator named Jaan Kaplinski, was among the first to speak about something closer to the bone. He stood up when Volkan asked the Balts to talk about how they had formed their perceptions of the Russians, and the Russians about how they had formed theirs of the Balts. "I grew up in Tartu," Kaplinski began, staring into the middle distance. "When I was a very young boy, it was occupied by the Nazis. I remember Soviet planes flying over the fields and machine-gunning people who were picking crops. I could tell they were Soviet planes because they had American engines that went *wah-oooh, wah-oooh*, and the German planes had engines that had a steadier sound. In my boyhood 'Russian boys' meant bullies. My first toy, a ball, was stolen from me by Russian boys.

"But I also remember that there was

a Russian family in our building, the family of an Orthodox priest. And the mother in that family one year made a Christmas tree for Estonian children whose parents had been repressed and deported." (Kaplinski did not mention it, but his own father died in a Siberian camp when he was four years old.) "She decorated the tree in the Lutheran way, so we could have Christmas. She was later arrested for it. So I concluded there were two kinds of Russians—the truly good and the violent."

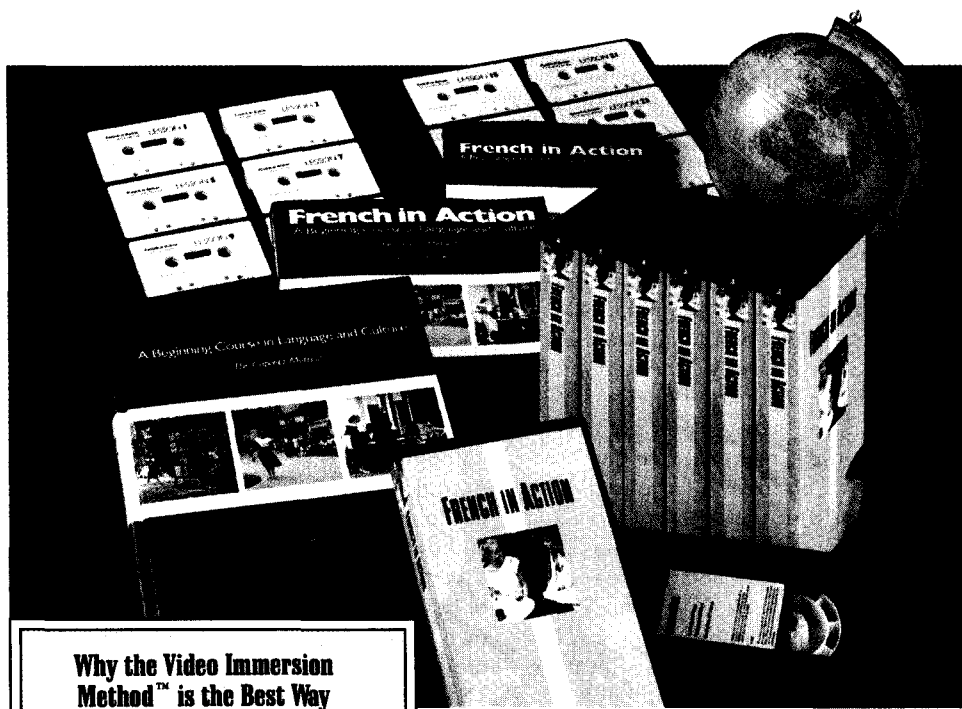
Others could not bring themselves to this kind of self-revelation. A Latvian politician, Juris Bojars, had one of the most interesting personal histories at the conference. Bojars is the chairman of the Democratic Labor Party of Latvia, an organization that includes many former Communists. According to *The Baltic Observer*, Bojars's party recently took in some members of the Fatherland coalition, a right-wing nationalist movement. This kind of "red-brown" coalition now governs Serbia; it is the kind of coalition that Russian reformers most fear might come to power if Boris Yeltsin topples.

Bojars is a short, forceful man with a fringe of brown hair, a moustache, and a goatee that gives him a passing resemblance to Lenin. His grandmother and mother had been to some degree Russified; they converted to the Russian Orthodox religion. Early in life he went to Moscow to complete his education, married a Russian woman, and worked for the KGB. He had, it appeared, bought the old Party line that ethnic differences would disappear under communism, to be replaced by a new, Soviet ethnicity. But neither Volkan nor the other Americans who worked with Bojars's group (Joseph Montville, a retired diplomat, and J. Anderson Thomson Jr., a psychiatrist) could induce Bojars to confront how his emotions about this earlier stage of his life might now contribute to his intense Latvian nationalism.

Instead Bojars filibustered, brandishing books and articles, many of which he had written, that defended Latvia's new citizenship policy. He discoursed on the relationship between Latvian and Sanskrit, which showed how ancient the Baltic peoples were. He complained that in the Soviet period Latvian women could not even give birth without speaking Russian, because so many doctors and nurses could not



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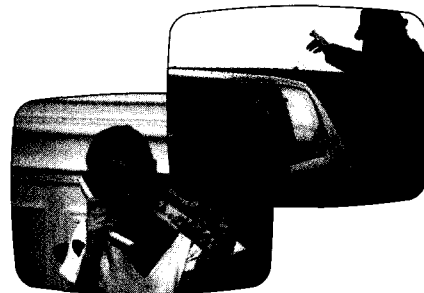
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speaking Latvian. So if, today, Latvians treated Russians harshly, it was only to be expected. "Each nation has had, historically, its own territory, and if this is invaded by another ethnos, quite naturally they feel the need to defend themselves," he said. "Our people cannot forget that the people who came and shot and deported them were Russians. People are not angels."

The more the Americans wanted him to speak about his own life and feelings, the more vituperative Bojars became, and the more ready to see conspiracies against Latvia. "The mafia here in Latvia is Russian," he said on the second day. "But there are some racketeer gangs run by Jews, and the Russians have been selling them arms. The Jews have great power here. They are in business and the media; they aren't workers. But they have good contacts with the American media." Latvia, Bojars said, was beset by foreign agents. The KGB had infiltrated many of the country's political parties. The CIA had a candidate running in the next election. And Germany still considered the country part of its rightful sphere of influence. "There is a covert battle for Latvia under way," he said.

Before anyone could respond, Bojars demonstrated one of the unavoidable pitfalls in the psychopolitical approach to ethnic conflict. He announced that he had pressing business in the Latvian parliament and walked out of the session, taking his emotions with him, unplumbed.

BUT AS THE days passed, other participants began to respond to the prodding of Volkan and the other Americans. A graying, tightly composed Russian named Edvard Ozhiganov, a consultant on ethnic issues to the Supreme Soviet, began at the conference by speaking at stupefying length about a computer program he had devised that reduced the problem of ethnic conflict to a series of factors that, once quantified, enabled him to predict when and where conflict might occur. "I want to know about your feelings, not your computer," Volkan told him. On the third day of the conference Ozhiganov finally complied.

"I am afraid," he said quietly. "I am afraid for Russia and the consequences of its falling apart. I'm afraid of war and hunger. I'm afraid I'll be hungry and killed. My biggest fear is that I will

have to take arms into my own hands to defend myself from armed groups of soldiers and bandits scavenging in the chaos."

This, he said, was why Russia hesitated to bring troops home from the Baltic states when there were no jobs and no apartments to give them. "Imagine," he said, "battalions and divisions returning to Moscow with weapons and tanks. It would be a *smuta*, a time of troubles like the time Russia endured in the beginning of the seventeenth century. And I am afraid that it would last until I am an old man." Another Russian, a young diplomat named Vladimir Ionkin, spoke of the frustration and humiliation Russians began to feel when the Soviet Union broke up in late 1991.

The Baltic participants seemed to find it harder emotionally to deal with these new fearful and frustrated Russians than with the older imperialistic Soviets. Andres Heinapuu, a nationalist member of the Estonian parliament, struggled to explain why, regardless of what the Russians might now say, the Estonian nationalists did not want them as citizens. "The Estonians are not psychologically ready to integrate," Heinapuu said. "If there is a critical mass of Russians in the country, they form a danger to Estonians' cultural identity. We feel this danger every day."

On the conference's last day Zoya Zarubina offered an apology. "We thought we did a wonderful thing in 1939 and 1940," she began, referring to the time when the Soviet Union annexed the Baltic states. "We thought we were liberating you from fascism. We didn't know about the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact." *Glasnost* had enabled her to learn a new version of her own history. "I feel ashamed of what Russians did in Eastern Europe, not only in the Baltic. I apologize, in the name of my family and myself."

THE CONFERENCE produced no cathartic moment of reconciliation, no tears, no embraces; nor had Volkan expected any. At the appointed time people shook hands, said good-bye, and went back to their lives. The Latvians, Lithuanians, and Estonians re-entered a world still reverberating with fear and anger after the Russian Defense Minister, Pavel Grachev, had informed the NATO defense ministers that Russia had suspended its troop withdrawals from all three Baltic

states. Would Jaan Kaplinski and Andres Heinapuu tell their fellow legislators that fear, rather than revanchism, might be motivating Grachev? Would their colleagues believe them if they did? Would Edvard Ozhiganov go back to the Supreme Soviet and talk about Kaplinski's childhood memories or Heinapuu's fear of assimilation? And would it make any difference if he did?

A pessimist would assume that the handful of people who gathered in Jurmala would affect their countries like a few drops of water sprinkled into desert sands. A realist would understand that psychopolitical conferences cannot in themselves resolve ethnic conflicts. The tension between Russia and the Baltic states has a concrete dimension that exists separate from the underlying emotions and that will not be resolved until political leaders decide to resolve it and come up with the compromises and the money to do so.

But a realist might also see the value of helping individuals to confront their own fears and recognize the fears of the other side. Harold Saunders, the Camp David veteran, recalled that he had participated for years in informal conferences between Russians and Americans, conferences that began during détente and continued through the tense early 1980s. They had no appreciable impact at top political levels until Mikhail Gorbachev came to power. When Gorbachev decided to seek reconciliation with the West, many of the people to whom he turned for advice and proposals were veterans of those conferences. Saunders also participated in pioneering conferences between Palestinians and Israelis. He notices that today nearly all the Palestinian delegates to the Middle East peace talks, and a growing number of Israelis, are graduates of those conferences.

As the conference ended, Volkan was optimistic. He had funding for two more sessions, the first of which he plans to hold in Estonia. As a psychoanalyst, he knows that most therapy ends ambiguously. Its success can sometimes be perceived only years after it ends, if the patient has managed to refrain from destroying himself. So it will be with his treatment for the Russians and the Balts. Only years from now, if they have managed to avoid war, might Volkan be able to make a strong case that Freud was wrong.

—Robert Cullen

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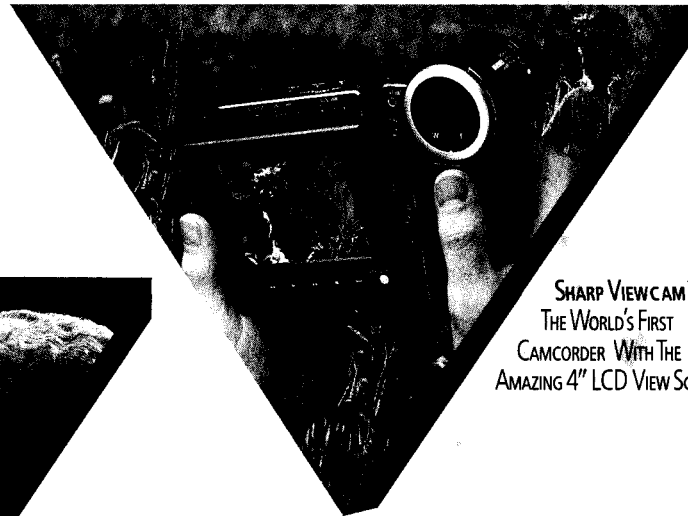
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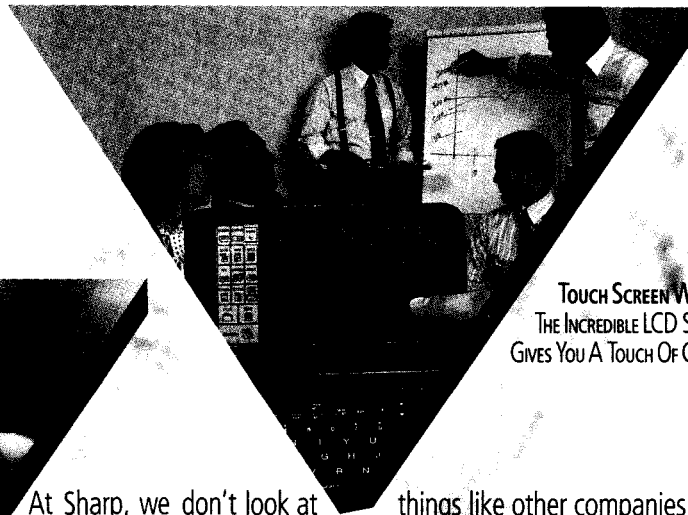
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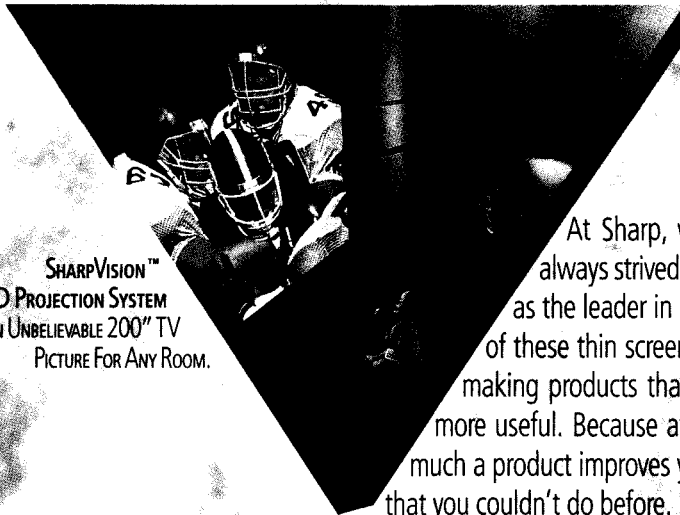
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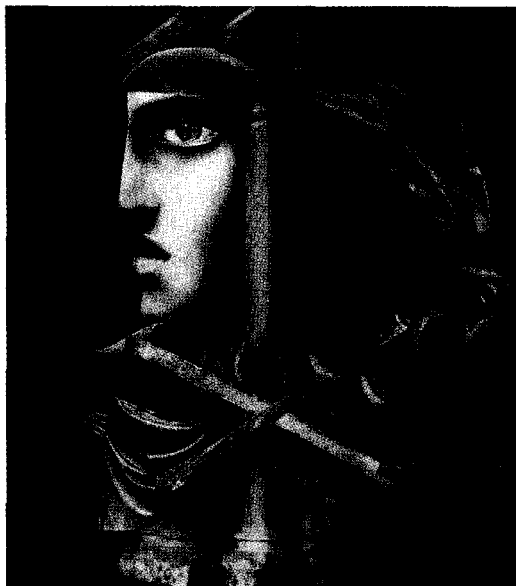
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Motivated variously by historical, theological, and personal concerns, a rapidly growing cadre of scholars, most of them women, is exploring one of the great overlooked subjects in scholarship: the domain of Jewish and Christian women in ancient times

WOMEN AND THE BIBLE

BY CULLEN MURPHY



PERHAPS A RUMOR OF impending persecution lay behind it, as several scholars have speculated. Perhaps the reason for concealment was something else entirely. We can never know why twelve ancient codices and a fragment of a thirteenth came to rest where they were found. The place was a rugged curtain of cliffs rising above the valley of the Nile River, near where today there is a village called Nag Hammadi. The time was the late fourth century or early fifth century A.D. For whatever reason, someone, perhaps a

monk from the local monastery of St. Pachomius, took steps to preserve some holy books—Coptic translations of works that had originally been written in Greek, works of the kind that had been denounced as heretical by Athanasius, the archbishop of Alexandria. The words of the prophet Jeremiah may have played through the mind of the person hiding the codices: “Put them in an earthenware jar, that they may last for a long time.” For it was in an earthen jar, hidden in a cavity under a rock at the base of the cliffs, that the papyrus manuscripts were eventually discovered.

The Nag Hammadi library, as these texts have come to be called, was brought to light in 1945. By the early 1950s, after feuds and transactions of Levantine complexity, almost all of the Nag Hammadi collection was in

the safe but jealous hands of the Coptic Museum, in Cairo, which for many years proved exceedingly particular about whom it would allow to study the documents. It was clear very early, however, that the codices, which contained forty previously unknown works, would offer unprecedented access to the world of the Gnostics, a variegated group of Christian communities, active as early as a century after the time of Jesus, that diverged sharply from the emerging Christian orthodoxy in many ways—one of them frequently being the prominence, both in theology and in community life, of women.

Elaine Pagels was a doctoral student in religion at Harvard University during the late 1960s, when mimeographed transcriptions of the Nag Hammadi library were circulating among American and European scholars. Her

area of interest was the history of early Christianity. There were no women then on the faculty of Harvard's program in religion, and the dean who accepted Pagels as a doctoral candidate had turned her down the first time she applied. In this field, he explained in a letter, women didn't last. But now, after applying again, here she was, with the working knowledge of Latin and Greek that anyone dealing with early Christian texts requires, and the Nag Hammadi mimeographs caught her attention. Because the transcriptions were in Coptic, which is Egyptian written with the Greek alphabet and a few other characters, Pagels added Coptic to her repertoire (and also Hebrew) and got to work.

Sitting one afternoon recently in her office at the Institute for Advanced Study, in Princeton, I spoke with Pagels about her Harvard years and other matters. Pagels, who is a professor in the religion department at Princeton University, works at certain times at the institute, which offers scholars a chance to pursue research without the distraction of teaching. It is a modern and spacious place, set impersonally among vast lawns. In Pagels's office a photograph of her late husband sat upon the sill. A girl's bicycle was propped against a wall. Pagels has two young children, and a demeanor that somehow manages to be calmer than her circumstances are.

"I discovered," Pagels said, thinking back to her initial encounter with the Nag Hammadi materials, "as did the other graduate students, that our professors had file folders full of Gnostic texts of secret Gospels that many of them told us were absurd and blasphemous and heretical—but interesting. And I *did* find these texts interesting. And exciting. I think that perhaps my empathy for them had something to do with being a woman in an environment that was almost exclusively male. I found things among the heretics that were startlingly congenial." Pagels became part of the team that would translate the Nag Hammadi texts into English and provide a critical apparatus for them.

Not until 1975, five years after completing a doctoral dissertation on certain aspects of the Nag Hammadi li-

brary, did Pagels have an opportunity to inspect the documents themselves. At various times during a stay in Egypt, Pagels would visit the small, unprepossessing room in the Coptic Museum where the Nag Hammadi library is kept, one day perhaps to examine *The Interpretation of Knowledge*, another to examine *A Valentinian Exposition* or *The Gospel of Mary*. The documents looked, she remembers thinking, like tobacco leaves. Each fragile page, each fragment, lies flat between sheets of hard plastic, the black lettering stark against a mottled golden background, the underlying weave of the crushed papyrus fronds plainly visible. The Coptic Museum was a place of columns and courtyards and quiet. The only interruption was caused by the cleaning woman, and Pagels and any other scholars present would continue working at their desks when she came in, lifting their legs as soapy water was spilled and spread beneath them over the stone floors.

In a book called *The Gnostic Gospels* (1979), which received wide attention when it was published and occasioned a sometimes bitter scholarly debate, Pagels took some of those fragments that lie flat between plastic and sought to give them dimension, set them in history, bring ancient sensibilities back to life. She described Gnostic groups who saw God as a "dyad" embodying both masculine and feminine aspects, and who explicitly invoked the feminine aspect in their prayers: "May She who is before all things, the incomprehensible and indescribable Grace, fill you within, and increase in you her own knowledge." Some groups conceived of the third person in Christianity's trinitarian God—a God consisting of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—to be female, and so rendered the Trinity, logically enough, as Father, Son, and Mother. Powerful feminine imagery and ideology suffuse many Gnostic texts, and this found parallels in the practice of a number of Gnostic groups, which permitted women to hold priestly office. Gnostic thought was disorderly and fantastical, and for a variety of reasons was spurned by Christian polemicists (although some elements seem to find echoes in the Gospel of John). But it preserves some early Christian traditions, and is valuable for its reflection of currents in popular religion that are only dimly reflected in the canon of sanctioned Christian works—currents important to an understanding of Christianity's unruly beginnings.

Some of the Gnostics were much intrigued by the Creation stories in the Book of Genesis. Pagels, too, became intrigued, and in 1988 she produced *Adam, Eve, and the Serpent*, a book more ambitious than *The Gnostic Gospels*. The Bible's Creation stories—or, perhaps more precisely, the interpretation of the Creation stories that came to be accepted—form the basis for a view of humanity as existing in a fallen state, of woman as having led humanity astray, of man as being ordained to be the master of woman, and of sexuality as a corrupting aspect of human nature. And yet, as Pagels shows, this is not how the Cre-

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ation stories were interpreted by many Jews and early Christians, and it is sometimes difficult to see how such conclusions came to be drawn. Pagels points to other traditions in Jewish and Christian thought: of the Creation stories as parables of human equality, men and women both being formed in the image and likeness of God; of the stories as evocations of God's gift of moral freedom. *Adam, Eve, and the Serpent* traces the clashes of interpretation in the early Church, which culminated in the triumph of Augustine, whose harsh views on the subject would become those of much of the Western world—would help define Western consciousness—for a millennium and a half.

The point is, Pagels told me, early Christianity was a remarkably diverse and fractious religious movement. There were traditions within it that the evolution of a stronger, more institutionalized tradition would largely destroy. Acknowledging this fact has implications for our own time and for people who have often felt excluded or even oppressed by the dominant tradition. It has implications in particular for women. "The history of Christianity has been told from a single point of view," Pagels said. "If that point of view is no longer tenable historically, then it enables people to develop other perceptions."

THE WORK OF ELAINE PAGELS IS BUT ONE MANIFESTATION of a larger phenomenon: the rapidly expanding influence of feminist scholars in the study of Jewish and Christian history, and the reassessment of certain issues that has ensued as a result. The body of work that these scholars have produced is by now substantial. Virtually all of it has been published within the past fifteen years. Most has been published within the past ten. While the writing can at times be difficult—some scholars don methodology like chain mail—a strikingly large proportion, whether in specialized journals or in books, is written so as to be broadly accessible to readers outside academe.

The motivations, besides simple intellectual curiosity, that lie behind this work are not difficult to discern. There is the perception that the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament deal with women unfairly in many spheres; the need to understand why they do; the suspicion that an alternative past awaits recovery. Among some scholars there is a conviction, too, that recovering the past could help change the present—for example, could help make the case for giving women access to positions in religious ministry and religious leadership from which they are now barred. Although half of all Christian denominations permit the ordination of women, as do Reform and Conservative Judaism, the issue remains a matter of strongly felt conflict. The work of feminist scholars, both individually and collectively, has been greeted in some quarters with impatience, irritation, dismissiveness, even contempt. But it has also established women's issues as a permanent focus of biblical studies.

That it has done so is one important element of the broader engagement of feminism with every aspect of organized religion.

A few years ago I set out to explore this branch of scholarship—to meet some of its practitioners and become familiar with some of their work. My focus was not on politics but on research. The people whose work is touched on here are drawn not from the sometimes airy or angry outskirts of the feminist biblical enterprise but from its solid scholarly core. They come from several religious backgrounds, represent several scholarly disciplines, and, as feminists, display a range of stances toward religion in general and the Bible in particular. Their work thus defies easy summary. My intention is to let it speak for itself.

The Patriarchy Problem

THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT HAS AS YET HAD MEAGER impact on some academic realms, but the realm of religion is not among the scarcely affected. Even if the convergence of feminism and religion has prompted developments on the fringes of popular culture which would strike some as bizarre (the proliferation of neo-pagan "goddess" movements comes to mind), the truly significant consequences have occurred closer to the mainstream of ministry and scholarship. Walk into the department of religion or the divinity school at any major university today and the bulletin board will paint the same picture: seminar after workshop after lecture on almost any conceivable matter involving women and religion. The influx of women into divinity-school programs has by now received considerable attention. So has the movement to adopt "inclusive" language, when appropriate, in translations of Scripture, and to correct mistranslations of Scripture that have served to obscure feminine references and imagery. This movement saw its most important victory in 1990, with the publication by the National Council of Churches of the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible. But much of the work being done by women in biblical scholarship and related fields—work that demands immense erudition—remains far less well known.

The Bible has always been a compelling object of study, both because questions of religious faith are inextricably involved and because it is a window—albeit one whose refractions may distort and occlude—onto much of human history. With respect to issues of gender the Bible is also, of course, highly problematic, to use a word that no feminist scholar I've spoken with can help uttering in a tone of ironic politeness. It is a central tenet of contemporary feminism that a patriarchal template governs the way people have come to think and behave as individuals and as societies. The Bible is no stranger to patriarchy. It is an androcentric document in the extreme. It was written mostly if not entirely by men. It was edited by men.



Subservient? . . . Af

It describes a succession of societies over a period of roughly 1,200 years whose public life was dominated by men. And because the Bible's focus is predominantly on public rather than private life, it talks almost only about men. In the Hebrew Bible as a whole, only 111 of the 1,426 people who are given names are women. The proportion of women in the New Testament is about twice as great, which still leaves them a small minority.

As a prescriptive text, moreover, the Bible has been interpreted as justifying the subordination of women to

men: "In pain you shall bring forth children, yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you." "Wives, be subject to your husbands as you are to the Lord." "Indeed, man was not made from woman, but woman from man. Neither was man created for the sake of woman, but woman for the sake of man." As a text that has been presumed by hundreds of millions of people to speak with authority, moreover, the Bible has helped enforce what it prescribes. There is no getting around the disturbing character, for women, of much of the Bible,



er the Last Supper

short of an interpretive reading (a “hermeneutic,” to use the term of art) that may represent something of a stretch—short of what one biblical scholar has called an act of “hermeneutical ventriloquism.”

The subjection of the Bible to historical and critical scrutiny, a revolution in scholarship that began during the latter half of the nineteenth century, was undertaken almost entirely by men. It did not occur to these men that the way the Bible treats women—or, just as important, fails to treat women—might be a fit matter for study. The

Society of Biblical Literature, which remains to this day the leading professional group in the field, was founded in 1880, and inducted its first woman member in 1894. But the relative handful of women who embarked on careers in biblical studies in the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth showed virtually no interest in women’s issues. As the historian Dorothy Bass, of the Chicago Theological Seminary, has shown, it was women outside academe who first pursued the matter: women like the abolitionist Sarah Grimké, in the 1830s, and, lat-

er, Frances Willard, of the Women's Christian Temperance Union.

Their aims, initially, were two. The first was to identify and critically confront passages and stories about women which they deemed objectionable—the stories, for example, of Delilah, in the Book of Judges, and of Jezebel, in I Kings. The second aim was to seek out and elevate to greater prominence passages and stories about women which are positive and ennobling—for example, the remarkable image of Wisdom personified as a woman, in Proverbs, and the stories of Deborah, in Judges, and of the prophetess Huldah, in II Kings. Both these strands of the early feminist response to the Bible have survived, in increasingly sophisticated forms, down to the present.

The suffragist leader Elizabeth Cady Stanton made a contribution by means of that remarkable fin-de-siècle document *The Woman's Bible*, the first volume of which was published in 1895. Though well into her eighties, Stanton oversaw a committee of female editors who scrutinized and critically glossed every passage in the Bible having to do with women. She came to the conclusion that little could be salvaged from Scripture which was fully compatible with the belief system of a rational modern feminist. None of the women who worked on *The Woman's Bible* was a biblical scholar. Female biblical scholars refused to participate in the project, afraid, Stanton believed, "that their high reputation and scholarly attainments might be compromised by taking part in an enterprise that for a time may prove very unpopular."

Female biblical scholars did not face up to issues of gender—did not, as Frances Willard had urged, "make a specialty of Hebrew and New Testament Greek in the interest of their sex"—in any significant way until the 1960s. One call to action came from a professor of biblical literature at Smith College, Margaret Brackenbury Crook, who in a book called *Women and Religion* (1964) took aim at the "masculine monopoly" on all important matters in all the world's great faiths. She repeated the plaintive question of the biblical figure Miriam: "Has the Lord spoken only through Moses?" By the 1970s, of course, a generalized version of that question could be sensed almost everywhere in the culture. Departments of religion and divinity schools were merely two among the crowd of institutions that saw more and more women seeking access, bringing with them unfamiliar questions and ways of thinking.

Biblical scholarship is still a predominantly male endeavor, but inroads by women have been substantial. The female membership of the Society of Biblical Literature amounted to three percent of the total in 1970. It now exceeds 16 percent. The share of the student membership that is female—a harbinger, surely—is 30 percent. In 1987 the society elected its first woman president, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, a theologian who at the time was a professor at Episcopal Divinity School, and who now teaches at Harvard. The joint annual meeting of the SBL and the American Academy of Religion

today features a large number of sessions on women's issues, chiefly by women but sometimes by men. "Prostitutes and Penitents in the Early Christian Church." "Redeeming the Unredeemable: Genesis 22—A Jewish Feminist Perspective." "Rape as a Military Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible." The opening address at the AAR portion of last year's joint meeting was given by Mary Daly, whose first two books, *The Church and the Second Sex* (1968) and *Beyond God the Father* (1973), were a source of inspiration to many women with an interest in religion. (Daly herself has ventured not only beyond God the Father but also beyond Christianity, and is by now well off the beaten track; she maintains an uneasy professorship in the department of theology at Boston College, a school run by Jesuit priests.) At the next joint meeting, this coming November, the SBL will install its second woman president: Phyllis Trible, of Union Theological Seminary.

IT WAS SCHÜSSLER FIORENZA'S WORK—MOST NOTABLY her book *In Memory of Her* (1983), to which I was introduced almost a decade ago in the course of research on a related subject—that drew me into the world of women whose academic lives revolve, one way or another, around the central texts of the Jewish and Christian traditions. Schüssler Fiorenza, a soft-spoken native of Germany, is the Krister Stendahl Professor of Divinity at the Harvard Divinity School. She is also a founder and a co-editor of the *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, one of several academic journals in the field with a focus on women. Schüssler Fiorenza is quick to acknowledge that coming to the United States, as she did in 1970, with a fresh doctorate in New Testament studies from the University of Münster, marked a turning point in her interests. The United States offered what Germany at the time did not: a strong and active feminist movement and a university system whose faculties—crucially, whose theology-department faculties—were open to women. Schüssler Fiorenza, in her own words, "began doing theology as a woman and for women." Her writing has focused primarily on the role played by women during the conception, birth, and infancy of Christianity.

Historical reconstruction of the Jesus movement is risky and fraught. Among other things, as Schüssler Fiorenza reminded me during a conversation one afternoon, "within both Judaism and Christianity the patriarchal side won"—thus determining the lens through which interpretation would look. One must approach the texts with a "hermeneutic of suspicion," to use a phrase that is by now a cliché in feminist biblical circles. The references to women that do exist in Christian works, Schüssler Fiorenza said, surely represent the tip of the iceberg, though unfortunately much of the part that is submerged now is likely to remain submerged forever.

And yet, she went on, there is some significant material about women to work with, if only we are not blind to

it. The Gospels, she noted, are unequivocal in placing women prominently among the marginalized people who made up so much of Jesus' circle. Women are shown as having been instrumental in opening up the Jesus community to non-Jews. After the Crucifixion it was the women of Galilee who helped hold together the Jesus movement in Jerusalem as other disciples fled. Women were the first to discover the empty tomb and the first to experience a vision of a resurrected Jesus. Jesus' message was in part a radical attack on the traditional social structures of the Greco-Roman world—structures that limited the participation of women in the public sphere, and that the Jesus movement sought to replace with what Schüssler Fiorenza calls "a discipleship of equals."

And after Jesus was gone? Christianity's penumbral first centuries can be difficult to apprehend. The texts that would make up the New Testament—not to mention the many other texts that survive from Christian communities—were at this time being written, edited, and re-edited, each text created in the context of certain communities and to fulfill certain purposes. What emerges from Schüssler Fiorenza's reading is a Christian missionary movement that in its initial stages "allowed for the full participation and leadership of women." She notes in *In Memory of Her* that in the authentic letters of Paul, women are singled out by name and given titles the same as or comparable to those held by male leaders. Prisca, a traveling missionary, is described by Paul as a peer, a "co-worker." Phoebe, in Cenchreae, is called a *diakonos*, a title Paul also gives himself.

Some scholars have in the past tried to explain away evidence like this, Schüssler Fiorenza writes, by arguing that when held by women such titles must have been mere honorifics. Or they have translated the titles differently. *Diakonos*, for example, which is usually translated as "minister," "missionary," or "deacon" when associated with men, has usually been downplayed as "deaconess" or even "helper" when associated with women. Scholars have also argued that people whose names are apparently female must actually have been men. Schüssler Fiorenza observes that the social mores of the time left ample room for women to wield authority in early Christianity. For one thing, the rituals of Christianity evolved in a network of churches based in homes, and within the home, women could claim important rights and responsibilities. Schüssler Fiorenza argues, finally, that early Christianity was built around a theology of equality; that Paul's famous reiteration in Galatians 3:28 of the ancient baptismal formula—"There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus"—represents not a radical and temporary breakthrough in Paul's thinking but an expression of broad and ordinary Christian belief. In Schüssler Fiorenza's view, Galatians 3:28 is "the magna carta of Christian feminism."

Schüssler Fiorenza is a theologian, and she has an ex-

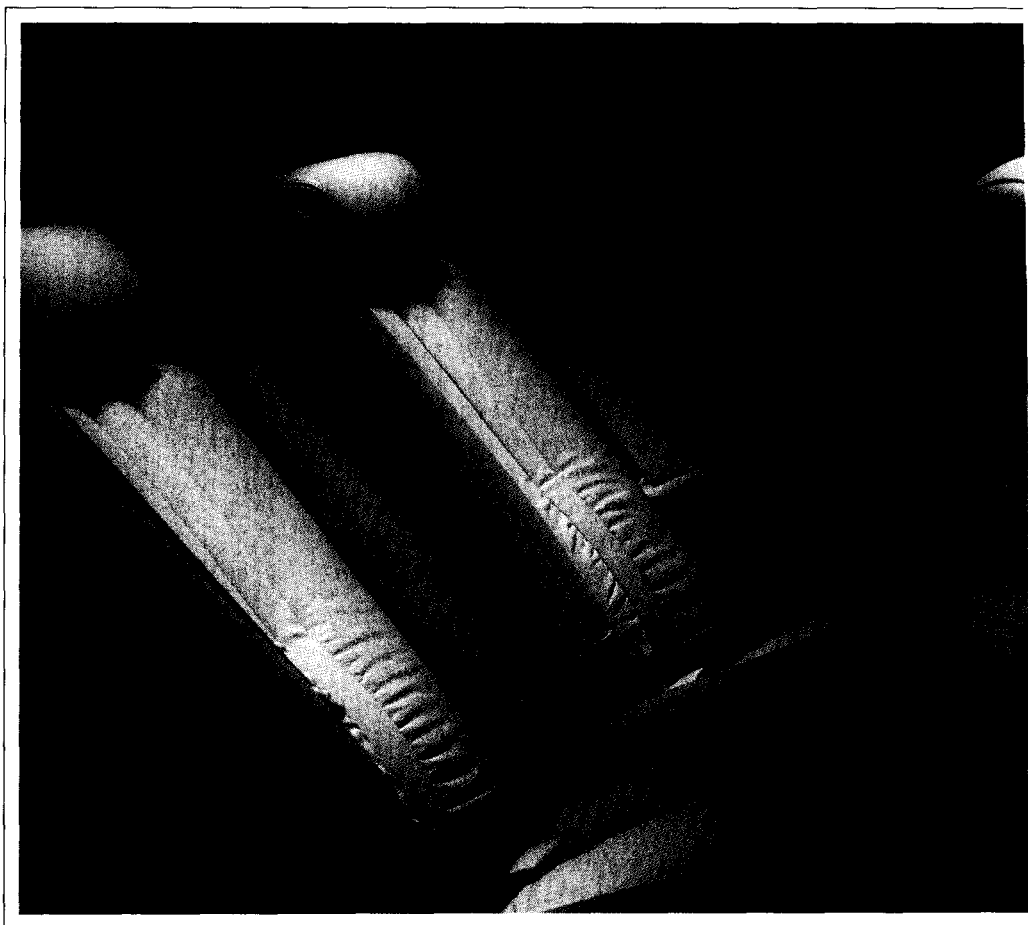
plicitly theological agenda. In her approach to Scripture she aims to highlight themes of unfolding liberation and emancipation. But large portions of her work exemplify a strategy pursued by non-theologians as well: the attempt to pierce the veil of the sources, to discern what was social and religious reality in a distant time. This may involve textual scholarship—training attention on vocabulary, on rhetorical style, on whatever can be inferred about the editing process. It may involve the disciplines of archaeology and anthropology—coming at early Jewish and Christian life from the outside, and looking at what the physical record has to say. All this work presupposes a

broad grounding in some very obscure aspects of history. The work can be frustrating in the extreme. The materials available are often meager, and the conclusions drawn sometimes precarious and insubstantial.

Elaine Pagels spoke about some of the endeavor's hazards and intricacies and opportunities in one of our conversations. We had been talking about the issue of an author's point of view. Pagels observed that in some instances the documentary record of certain suppressed opinions consists only of the surviving criticisms of those opinions. Before the discovery of the Nag Hammadi library, Gnostic thinking was a prime example: many Gnostic beliefs had been scathingly summarized in the writings of Irenaeus of Lyons, a second-century theologian and foe of heretics. Images of women can sometimes be made out in the same way. "We have to read the texts aware that the point of view may not reflect the whole social reality," Pagels told me. "It will reflect the point of view of the people writing the texts, and the groups they represent. And generally women were not doing the writing. So we have to make a lot out of the few clues that are found."

She reached for a comparison to bring home the nature of this situation. "Imagine," she said after a moment's reflection, "having to re-create the thinking of Karl Marx on the basis of a handful of anti-communist tracts from the 1950s."

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VISION OF A RESUR-
RECTED JESUS.**



Enough Room To Keep Comfortably



The New GS

There is a common curiosity among passengers. That is, that they somehow have a better understanding of where you're going than you do.

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every inch of the
road before you.

This stirring

Backseat Drivers Out Of Earshot.

Let us offer a solution to this
dilemma: the new Lexus GS.

The cabin has been thought-
fully well-designed to provide each
occupant with plenty of personal

space. So while your passengers

can bask in luxuries like automatic

climate control and an available

12-disc CD auto-changer, you can

focus on the task at hand: enjoying

interaction is made possible by the
responsive and finely tuned suspen-
sion system of the GS. One that
actually enables the driver to, in a
sense, communicate with the road.

That, we figured, would be all
the feedback you'd need.



The Relentless Pursuit Of Perfection.

Salvage Operations

UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, IN NEW YORK, occupies two city blocks along Broadway, in a neighborhood that might be thought of as upper Manhattan's religion district. The Jewish Theological Seminary of America lies across the street to the northeast, taking up much of a third city block. Across the street to the southwest, taking up a fourth city block, lies The Interchurch Center, which houses scores of religious organizations: groups devoted to social work, missionary work, publishing, broadcasting. (The square, clunky structure is known as "the God box.") And across the street directly to the west, occupying a fifth city block, is Riverside Church, long a bulwark of social activism with a mildly hallowed cast. Union is an example of the kind of liberal, nondenominational seminary whose student body in recent years has become increasingly female: almost 55 percent of its more than 300 students are women. It is a comfortable, reassuring place. The architecture is monastic, preserving outwardly in cool stone a way of life that no longer prevails inside. In the library's reading room, whose shelves hold the leather-bound classics required for exegetic work, and from around whose perimeter gleam the marbled pates of learned men, it is perhaps possible to believe that this is still the Union Seminary of Paul Tillich and Reinhold Niebuhr. But in the hallways of the living quarters the tricycles and toys betray a changed demography. The omnipresent flyers announcing meetings also tell a story. "Hunger Strike Demanding Action for Peace and Reunification in Korea." "Feminists for Animal Rights." "Lesbian-Gay Caucus Sez Howdy." These people, one senses, are busy, committed. They do not lack up-to-date agendas.

Phyllis Tribble is the Baldwin Professor of Sacred Literature. Her office at Union sits high above the quadrangle, under the eaves, and in it one can occupy a certain chair at a certain angle and almost be persuaded that the world outside the window is the world of Oxford or Cambridge.

TRIBBLE BELIEVES
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On a wall of Tribble's office hangs a photograph of a white-haired man in a dark suit and tie—James Muilenburg, who was a professor at Union when Tribble was a student here, in the late 1950s and early 1960s, and who taught the first class she attended at the seminary. "I'll never forget that class," Tribble recalled one day. She speaks with precision in an accent shaped by her native Virginia. "He walked in with a stack of syllabi under his arm and he put them down on the table and started quoting Hebrew poetry: the 'Sword of Lamech,' in Genesis. And he dramatized the whole thing—took the sword and plunged it in. He asked us where that sword reappeared, and jumped to Peter in the New Testament. I was utterly captivated, and have never gotten over it to this day." Tribble is but one of several female biblical scholars I've met who, whatever problems being a woman may have caused them in academe, warmly acknowledge a close intellectual relationship with a male mentor.

Tribble is the author of two books, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* (1978) and *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives* (1984), that would appear in anyone's canon of feminist biblical studies. Even colleagues who have no affinity with Tribble's work—who differ radically in outlook—may acknowledge a debt. Ask graduate students in their twenties or established scholars in their thirties or forties how an interest was awakened in women's issues and biblical studies, and the answer will often turn out to involve an article or a book by Tribble.

It is important to recognize where Tribble stands in a spectrum that ranges, as she explained to me, "from some fundamentalists who claim that they are feminists but say they have no problem with the Bible to those at the other extreme who are unwilling to concede the Bible any authority at all." Tribble is in the middle. She doesn't forget for a minute, she said, that the Bible is a thoroughly patriarchal text. But she is hardly a member of the rejectionist camp. She believes that the Bible can be "reclaimed" as a spiritual resource for women. And in all fairness, she said, it must be pointed out that the Bible is sometimes not as patriarchal as translations would make it seem. This is not just a matter of exclusive language. Tribble pulled down a copy of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, opened it to Deuteronomy 32:18, and read this passage: "You were unmindful of the Rock that begot you, and you forgot the God who gave you birth." She said, "Those words 'gave you birth' are from a Hebrew term for 'writhing in labor,' so the translation, if accurate, is tame. But here is how the Jerusalem Bible translates it: 'fathered you.'"

The work that initially brought Tribble to prominence was a pair of journal articles in the 1970s on the two Creation stories in the Book of Genesis. These articles—the first ones written on the subject from a feminist perspective—were an attempt at reclamation. Tribble argued that properly understood, the Creation stories, including the story of Adam and Eve, did not actually say what centuries of interpretation have made them say. For example, is

The desert that glistened with water.

Southeastern New Mexico.
It's home to mesquite and
chaparral, dust devils and mesas
and horizons that shimmer
with heat.

For the animals of this parched
land, survival comes with water.

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area helped build special watering
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woman to be considered subordinate to man, as some traditional interpretations would have it, simply because she was created after he was? If that is the case, Tribble argued, then why are human beings not regarded as subordinate to animals, since Genesis 1:27 plainly declares that human beings were created after the animals were?

But that is almost beside the point, because it is a mistake, in Tribble's view, to think of the first human being, Adam, as male. She points out that the Hebrew word *'adham*, from which "Adam" derives, is a generic term for humankind—it denotes a being created from the earth—and is used to describe a creature of undifferentiated sex. Only when the Lord takes a rib from *'adham* to make a companion are the sexes differentiated, and the change is signaled by the terminology. The creature from whom the rib was taken is now referred to not as *'adham* but as *'ish* ("man"), and the creature fashioned from the rib is called *'ishshah* ("woman"). In Tribble's reading, the sexes begin in equality. It is only after the act of disobedience occasioned by the serpent's temptation, and the departure of *'ish* and *'ishshah* from their initial and intended condition, that the sexes fall out of equality. It is only then, in this disobedient state, that the man establishes his dominance. Oppression of women by men, then, is not what was meant for humanity, even if it is what we have come to. "Rather than legitimating the patriarchal culture from which it comes," Tribble concluded, "the myth places that culture under judgment."

Much as one hears the polite word "problematic" applied to material in the Bible which some feminist scholars deem to be negative, so also one hears the polite word "optimistic" applied to interpretations that some feminist scholars deem to be too positive. Tribble is not unfamiliar with the latter charge. Her response would be that "optimistic" is a term that makes sense only if one assumes that the relationship people have with the Bible is as with something dead. She thinks of the Bible differently—as if it were a pilgrim forging new relationships over time. There are ways, she believes, of articulating a conversation between feminism and the Bible in which each critiques the other.

I was familiar, of course, with how feminism might critique the Bible. I asked Tribble what critique the Bible offers of feminism. She replied that there was sometimes a tendency to make too much of feminism, to put it on a pedestal, and that the Bible calls attention to that kind of propensity. "It warns," she said, "against idolatry."

TRIBBLE'S SPECIALTY IS A FORM OF CRITICISM KNOWN as rhetorical criticism, which pays particular attention to a document's literary architecture. During one conversation Tribble walked me through some passages that, together, may offer an instance of a biblical woman's falling victim to editorial manhandling. The passages tell the story of Miriam—the sister of Moses and Aaron, a woman who was perhaps considered by the Isra-

elites to be the equal of her brothers, but of whom few traces survive in the Bible as it has finally come down to us.

We meet Miriam in the Book of Exodus. It is she who persuades Pharaoh's daughter to raise the infant Moses—left in a basket among the rushes on the banks of the Nile—as her own, and to bring along Moses' mother as nurse. Miriam is not at this point given a name; the woman who saves the infant's life is identified only as his sister. And as the story of Moses proceeds, Miriam disappears—until the crossing of the Red Sea. Then, when the Israelites reach the far shore, Pharaoh's armies having been destroyed, there is a song of rejoicing: the poetic Song at the Sea, sung by Moses and the people of Israel. It begins, "I will sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously; / horse and rider he has thrown into the sea." No sooner has Moses finished than there comes a small fragment of text that appears out of place. The fate of Pharaoh's armies is for some reason quickly retold, and then, with the Israelites once again safely on shore, we learn that "the prophet Miriam, Aaron's sister," begins to sing the very same Song at the Sea. She sings the first two lines. The text then moves on to other business.

Tribble paused. There are several interesting things here, she said. One is that we learn for the first time that the sister of Aaron, who must also be the sister of Moses, has a name, and that it is Miriam. We also see that she is called a prophet and that this occurs at a place in the text well before the place where Moses is first called a prophet, though the precise meaning of "prophet" in the context of Exodus remains unclear. What this piece of text about Miriam represents, Tribble said, is the dogged survival of an earlier version of the Exodus story. Indeed, she pointed out, scholars have argued that in the most ancient Israelite traditions the singing of the Song at the Sea was ascribed not to Moses but to Miriam. The role was only later shifted away from Miriam. (As an aside, Tribble observed that the first work on the attribution of the Song at the Sea to Miriam dates back to the mid-1950s—and was done by men. She added pointedly, "I'm not one to say that you can't use the previous generation of scholarship—not at all.")

Miriam moves with the people of Israel into the desert, whereupon she disappears from the Book of Exodus. But she reappears later in the Bible, in connection with what seems to be a severe clash within the leadership, one from which Miriam emerges the loser—accounting, perhaps, for her diminished prominence. The reappearance occurs amid the jumble of the Book of Numbers, wherein Miriam and Aaron are heard to question the authority of their brother, asking the question that Tribble and others ask more broadly: "Has the Lord spoken only through Moses?" The Lord does not punish Aaron, but Miriam is struck down with a skin affliction, possibly leprosy, for her rebelliousness, and later dies in the wilderness of Zin.

And yet there are signs that the memory of Miriam in the Israelite consciousness remains an active and uplifting one. Miriam has always been associated with water, Tribble noted—remember the basket among the rushes? remember the Song at the Sea?—and the text immediately following the notice of Miriam's death again brings up the subject of water. It reads, "Now there was no water for the congregation." In standard editions of the Bible that sentence starts a new paragraph, as if the subject is suddenly being changed. Tribble said, "Written Hebrew doesn't have such breaks. The paragraph marking after the end of the Miriam story is artificial. It makes you miss the idea that what is happening is connected to Miriam's death. Nature is mourning the loss of Miriam." Henceforward in the Bible, Miriam reappears only in hints and fragments, as in this passage from Deuteronomy: "Remember what the Lord your God did to Miriam on your journey out of Egypt." But she survives in real life—in the form of the continuing popularity of the name Miriam. The New Testament, compiled more than a millennium after Miriam's death, is populated with a multitude of women named Mary—the Hellenized version of the Hebrew Miriam. It is no coincidence, Tribble has argued, that the Magnificat, the great canticle of Mary the mother of Jesus, borrows imagery directly from the Song at the Sea.

Miriam, Tribble said, is only one of a number of apparently powerful women in the Bible who are alluded to almost in passing, the modesty of the references at odds with the importance of the roles these women seem to play. The references hint, perhaps, at the existence of a class of women in Israel whose history has in essence been lost, or can today be recovered only by means of the most delicate salvage, even then yielding mere wisps of insight. But that the references survive at all—that the editors believed some mention of these women had to be made—is itself suggestive.

"It shows," Tribble said, "that the stories just couldn't be squelched."

The Earliest Israelites

DURING PART OF ALMOST EVERY YEAR FOR THIRTY years Carol Meyers, a professor of religion at Duke University, has left behind the comforts of university life for the rigors of archaeological excavations in the Middle East. For the past five summers she and her husband, Eric, have led excavations at a place called Sepphoris, in Israel, a site with remains as recent as the Crusades and as ancient as the Iron Age. Sepphoris, near Nazareth, in Galilee, is said in Christian tradition to be the birthplace of Mary. This summer Carol and Eric Meyers are excavating an Iron Age site at Sepphoris, one that dates to the earliest years of the Israelite people.

I visited Carol Meyers not long before her latest tour

of duty in the Middle East, and she began describing the conditions under which she and her colleagues worked there. We were in her Gothic office at Duke, and the crowded shelves around us held books like *L'architecture domestique du Levant* and *Catalogue of Ancient Near-Eastern Seals in the Ashmolean Museum*—the sort of books that elicit in me a vague yearning for baked earth and native porters. When you step off the plane in Israel, Meyers said, it is always a visual shock. Even with the achievements of modern irrigation—even in the rainy season—much of the landscape is forbidding: barren, rocky, thorny. And in the summer it

is *hot*. And in the winter, as people abroad often do not realize, it is *cold*. There is wind and hail and sleet.

These conditions are at their most extreme in the hill country of Judea and Samaria and Galilee, where the Israelites first emerged, inhabiting the unforgiving uplands because the Canaanite city-states controlled the fertile bottomlands. In this marginal ecological niche, where water was scarce and soils were bad, the tribes of Israel clung to a tenuous subsistence. They terraced the hills to make fields. They built cisterns lined with slaked-lime plaster to hold water.

Precisely who the Israelites were and where they came from remain matters of debate, but their appearance in the Land of Canaan can be dated to roughly 1250 B.C.

The period of the Israelite monarchy, the kingdom of Saul and David and Solomon and their successors, was two centuries away, and the demands of social organization fell almost entirely upon the family—or, more precisely, upon clusters of related families. There was no central government, no structured politics, no sense of a public domain.

In this inhospitable and tribalized world, Carol Meyers believes, men and women functioned in social parity. The books of the Bible that describe this period of Israel's history—Judges and Joshua, primarily—do not necessarily show this to be the case, of course. Having achieved final form centuries later, they depict a society in which most of the important roles were played by men.

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Masterful? . . . At the

But, as Meyers observed, there is frequently a big disjunction between a society's public stance and the everyday social reality; and everyday social reality in ancient Israel has only recently become an object of scrutiny. In biblical studies as in many other kinds of scholarship, social history has been a latecomer, and it is in social rather than political history that women tend at last to emerge from the background.

That Carol Meyers developed an interest in biblical studies at all is an accident of history. When she was an

undergraduate at Wellesley, in the mid-1960s, a course in the Old Testament and the New Testament was required for graduation. Wellesley's insistence on biblical education, now long since dropped, had deep historical roots: Wellesley was a college where female biblical scholars had since the late nineteenth century found a congenial home. The first woman to present a paper at a meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature (1913) was a Wellesley professor, as was the first woman to publish a paper in the society's *Journal of Biblical Literature* (1917).



Parting of the Red Sea

Meyers found herself drawn to the world of the Bible, and after a summer spent on an archaeological excavation in Wyoming, run by Harvard University, she knew that she wanted to combine biblical studies and archaeology. She began studying biblical Hebrew and then took up Akkadian, a Semitic language with many Hebrew cognates. In graduate school at Brandeis she was the only woman in most of her classes, and she had no female professors.

Needless to say, there was no such thing as feminist

biblical studies. Nor did Meyers feel an inner tug in that direction. "It really was only once I began teaching at Duke," she recalled when we spoke, "that I became aware of the need and of the potential for gender studies with respect to Scripture. It really wasn't even at my own initiative—and I'm not embarrassed to say that. When I started teaching here, my colleagues said, 'Listen, you have to put a couple of courses on our curriculum that are of your own design. Why don't you think about doing some course on women and the Bible, or something like

that?' This was in the mid-seventies, and I was the only woman in the department. Of course I said yes. When I started trying to put such a course together, I found out that there was no material. No one had done any research on it; no one had written about it. And that's when I started doing work myself."

Much of that work is embodied in *Discovering Eve: Ancient Israelite Women in Context* (1988), a book that draws on biblical sources and, more important, the insights offered by archaeology and social anthropology to reconstruct aspects of life in Israel before the dawn of monarchy and complex political institutions.

THE ECONOMIC FUNCTIONS OF MEN AND WOMEN at that time would have been separate and distinct, Meyers writes, with the men disproportionately responsible for tasks involving brute strength and the women responsible for tasks requiring technology or specialized skills or social sophistication: shearing wool and weaving cloth, processing and preserving food, teaching children, and managing a complex household whose membership, excavated floor plans suggest, usually went far beyond the nuclear family. In pre-monarchic Israel, as in primitive societies today where the household is the basic political and economic unit, women would have been central and authoritative figures.

Meyers observes further that the God of Israel, in sharp contrast to the gods of all other contemporaneous religions, was perceived at this time as asexual. Moreover, when God had to be described metaphorically, both male and female imagery was used. The prominence of God as father is a very late development in Israelite religion, Meyers argues, and makes only rare appearances in the Hebrew Bible itself (the term "father" is used in association with God just ten times).

The editors of the Bible have preserved traces of what Meyers believes was a relatively egalitarian regime. The Book of Judges, which reached its final form around the time of the Babylonian Captivity (586–538 B.C.), depicts life in Israel half a millennium earlier, and contains material that is very old. It brings to our attention an unusually large number of self-assured and powerful women. One of these, Deborah, is referred to as both a prophet and a judge. The "judges" in these earliest times were not magistrates but rather those few individuals among the Israelites whose authority extended beyond household and tribe and might be thought of as somehow national. Some scholars have even speculated that one portion of the Book of Judges, the so-called Song of Deborah, may have been composed by a woman. (Resolving such matters of authorship is at this point impossible. It should be noted that the recent and widely publicized *Book of J*, in which the literary critic Harold Bloom entertains the conceit that one of the authors of the Pentateuch, the so-called J source, was a woman, is not held

in high regard by biblical scholars, whatever the truth about J's identity may be. An earlier and more reliable book that speculates briefly on the same question is *Who Wrote the Bible?* by Richard Elliott Friedman.)

To Israelite women's economic productivity—at least equal in importance to that of men—must be added the essential element of reproductivity. Meyers reads the Bible mindful of the precarious demographic circumstances confronting the early Israelites. "It's wrong," she said, "to impose our idea of the individual on a society in which that may not have been a driving force in human development. The 'me-ness' or the 'I-ness' of our own contemporary life cannot be superimposed upon another era. The demands of community survival meant cooperation and a sense that what people were doing was in order for the group to survive. I get annoyed at some feminist critics who don't consider the social-history perspective. They see things like 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth' as meaning that the sole purpose of a woman is to conceive children. And all her interactions with God or with her husband seem to be to bring that fact about. They say, 'Well, a woman is just giving up her body for her husband.' I would counter by saying that in an agrarian society large families are essential. And that the Israelites were settling into marginal lands that had never been developed before. And whether they would make it or not depended on a certain population base. So the injunctions for fertility—and remember, they are addressed to both men and women—can be seen as a way of encouraging something that was beneficial if not essential for community survival."

It was a hard life. Infant mortality approached 50 percent. Excavations of burials show that female life expectancy, owing in part to the risks involved in repeated pregnancies, was perhaps thirty years, ten years less than life expectancy for men. Meyers told me that whenever she is on an archaeological dig in the Middle East, she inevitably begins to imagine herself as one of those women of ancient Israel. During an excavation Meyers is working the same remorseless terrain as did the Israelites 3,000 years ago, the two sexes side by side. The toil is unremitting and tedious, the environment dry and dusty. The days when scores of local laborers were supervised by aristocrats in pith helmets are long over. Archaeology is a complex enterprise, group-oriented in the extreme. Being a mother, Meyers for years had other responsibilities as well: young children for whom she had to care, on the site, even as the excavations proceeded.

Meyers's research has now moved beyond the formative centuries of Israel to the Israelite monarchy, which was instituted under Saul around 1020 B.C. This is the Israel of the two books of Samuel and the two books of Kings, a unified monarchy until, after the death of Solomon, around 920 B.C., the country was partitioned into northern and southern kingdoms. Under its kings, political structures in Israel became increasingly central-

ized and urban centers became increasingly important. A market economy grew up alongside the subsistence one. During this period, too, at least in urban settings, the position of women relative to men became more unequal—came more to resemble the kind of society we see in the Bible. It is hard to know how closely the situation in, say, Jerusalem reflected life elsewhere. Jerusalem, Meyers explained to me, was always an anomaly. After the Assyrians overran the Northern Kingdom, in 721 B.C., the population of Jerusalem the capital of the Southern Kingdom, was swollen by refugees. The city grew to be ten times as large as the next largest city in Israel. Its inhabitants no longer had ties to the land, and women no longer had a central role in economic life. There was poverty and chaos and great social stratification. There were large numbers of foreigners. There was something called public life, and it was in the hands of men. This is the time and the place in which much of the Hebrew Bible was fashioned. No wonder, Meyers said, that it is androcentric.

And yet, Meyers went on, some 90 percent of the people of Israel continued to live in agricultural villages in the countryside. She is cautious about applying the label “patriarchal” either too broadly or too loosely. Often the social patterns that prevail in the city are quite different from those that survive in the country. The term “patriarchy” may be legitimate in some places and times and not in others. Who knows what this nineteenth-century construct even means when applied to a pre-modern society like that of ancient Israel? “It does a disservice,” Meyers said, “to a complex piece of literature, the Bible, and to a society that existed for a thousand years, and changed and grew.”

Our gaze is deflected, too, Meyers said, by the very focus of the Bible on public life. On the relatively rare occasions when it affords a glimpse of private life, a patriarchal society is not always what we see. The Song of Songs offers such a glimpse. It contains much archaic material, and is especially noteworthy for the amount of text written in a woman’s voice, and in the first person. Some of the terminology is suggestively feminine, and even hints at female authority. For example, whereas in most of the Bible the standard term for a household is *bet’ab*, or “father’s house,” the term used in the Song of Songs is *bet’em*, or “mother’s house.” Indeed, there has been speculation that the Song of Songs was written by a woman.

My beloved is mine and I am his;
he pastures his flock among the lilies.
Until the day breathes and the shadows flee,
turn, my beloved, be like a gazelle
or a young stag on the cleft mountains.

Regardless of the author’s sex, the love poetry in the Song of Songs expresses an emotional bond not between a master and a subordinate but between equals.

Patrons and Presbyters

“DO YOU KNOW WHAT A ‘SQUEEZE’ IS?” UNDER other circumstances I might have confidently given a reply, but after several hours of conversation with Ross S. Kraemer, a fellow at the University of Pennsylvania’s Center for Judaic Studies, I had a feeling that the answer would be unexpected. We had met in Philadelphia, where Kraemer lives, and we talked over lunch and during a drive through town (interrupted by calls to a housekeeper on the car phone). Kraemer spoke about the Greek cult of

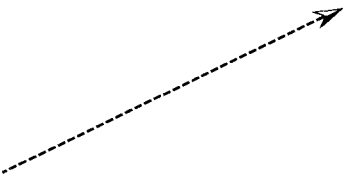
Dionysus, which, though little attention has been paid to the fact, was in its ecstatic rites the province of women. (A study of the cult of Dionysus had been the nucleus of her doctoral dissertation at Princeton.) She spoke about Mary Magdalene, one of the women who figured most prominently in the circle around Jesus, and noted that, commonplace public assumptions notwithstanding, nowhere do the New Testament writings identify her as a prostitute. (The tradition may have been developed deliberately as part of an attempt to diminish Mary’s stature, particularly in comparison with that of the Apostle Peter.) She spoke about the ancient “purple trade”—the trade in expensive purple-dyed fabric, the participants in which could be presumed to enjoy a certain affluence. This information bears on a woman named Lydia, a “dealer in purple cloth” from the city of Thyatira, who appears in the Acts of the Apostles and is an example of the kind of independent woman of means who seems to have played an especially active role in early Christianity.

M EYERS
IS CAUTIOUS ABOUT
APPLYING THE
LABEL “PATRIAR-
CHAL” TOO BROAD-
LY. WHO KNOWS
WHAT THIS
NINETEENTH-CEN-
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WHEN APPLIED TO
ANCIENT ISRAEL!

A squeeze is a mold of an ancient inscription carved in marble or other stone, obtained by coating the hard surface with a pliable substance—latex has supplanted papier-mâché as the medium most commonly used—and then peeling it off. Epigraphers, as those who study inscriptions are called, typically have a selection of them in their possession, along with files of photographs and



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The average retirement
lasts 20 years.



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Booked that special room on the beach.
Nothing was left to chance. If only you
planned your retirement as thoroughly as
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We're helping over 1,000,000 people retire
comfortably. And we can help make your
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transcriptions. The subject of squeezes had come up when Kraemer began describing the types of sources auxiliary to the Bible on which scholars can rely in the study of women and ancient religion. As time moves forward from primitive epochs, the sources become more plentiful. They include works of art and works of history and literature. They include a diverse array of documents involving women: for example, letters, tax receipts, wet-nurse contracts. And they include large numbers of inscriptions and fragments of inscriptions from buildings and monuments. Kraemer pointed to the work of one colleague whose analysis of Greek and Latin epigraphical evidence led her to conclude, contrary to the prevailing scholarly consensus, that at least sometimes Jewish women occupied prominent leadership roles in the ancient synagogue.

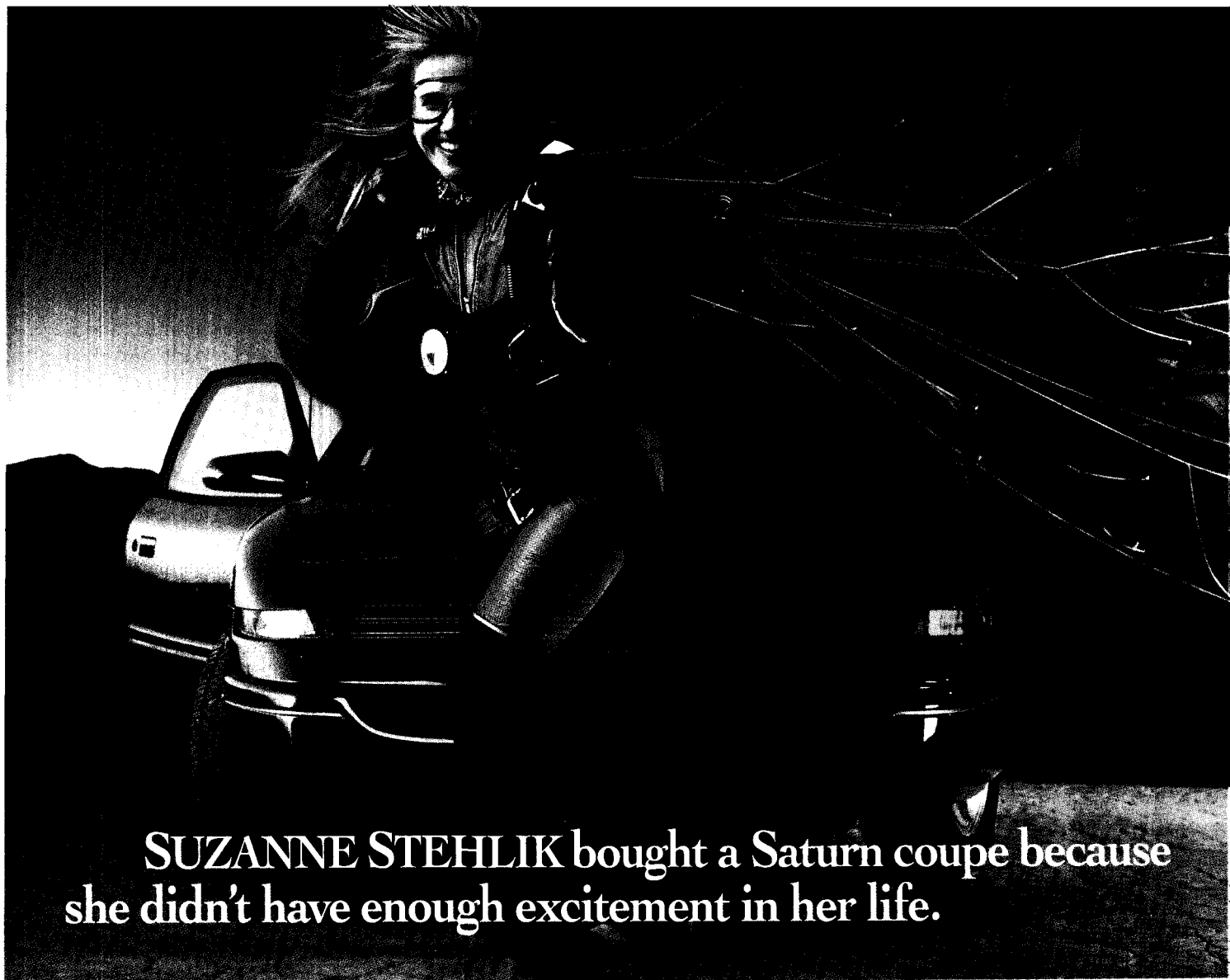
That the sources become more plentiful suggests a Mediterranean world that was becoming more complex. By the end of the sixth century B.C. the monarchic period in Israel had drawn to a close. The Israelites had endured a half century of exile in Babylon and then been allowed to return to their homeland. During the several hundred years that elapsed before the birth of Jesus, this homeland would be ruled by Persians, by Greeks, by Romans. The entire region would feel the influence of new economic and cultural systems. This is also the period when, in the Temple precincts of Jerusalem, the Hebrew Bible gradually cohered into the form in which we have it now, a collection of thirty-nine canonical texts, some of them incorporating material of great antiquity passed down through the ages more or less verbatim. (I remember Carol Meyers's once pointing out that the enormous stylistic variety of the Bible's Hebrew is one characteristic that eludes translation.) The canon of the Hebrew Bible was closed—no books would subsequently be added—toward the end of the first century A.D. By then the Romans had razed the Temple in Jerusalem, and the sacred texts of a new religious force, Christianity, were in the process of being compiled.

KRAEMER NOTED
THAT, COMMON-
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NOTWITHSTAND-
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MAGDALENE, WHO
WAS PROMINENT
IN JESUS' CIRCLE, AS
A PROSTITUTE.

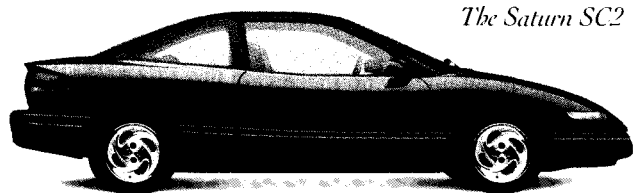
HOW EGALITARIAN WAS THAT NEW RELIGIOUS force? More important (and borrowing the title of an influential and controversial 1971 article by Leonard Swidler, a professor at Temple), was Jesus a feminist? Such questions unfailingly stir up a range of scholarly responses. I asked Ross Kraemer to talk about those questions, and the conversation gravitated naturally to the work of Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza. Kraemer acknowledged the enormous debt that everyone owed Schüssler Fiorenza, acknowledged that her work had been groundbreaking in providing a new but also comprehensive and coherent way of viewing the Jesus movement and its context. But she added that she was less, well, optimistic than Schüssler Fiorenza. "I'm not as optimistic not so much in terms of her recovery of what she thinks women in early Christianity did, what roles they played—I think she's likely to be right about a lot of that. Where I would part company is with her argument that the earliest theology of Christianity is *intentionally* egalitarian and feminist. I'm really not persuaded of that, though I think that Christianity in many communities may have had egalitarian consequences. Elisabeth wants to locate the intent in Jesus himself. It's not so much that I think she's wrong as that I'm simply not convinced we can know that she's right. It's very hard to argue that we know *anything* about what Jesus really thought, and the few things that any scholar would be willing to attribute to Jesus himself with any confidence don't address this particular issue."

The difficulty is that the Gospels and other early texts are encrusted documents, layered accretions formed out of a mixture of sources and motivations. On women's issues as on other matters, they may be surer guides to the communities in which they were formed than to the community around Jesus that they ostensibly describe. Kraemer used the various Resurrection stories and the part played by women in those stories to illustrate the pitfalls. All four Gospels depict women as having been the first to discover the empty tomb of Jesus, and in two of the Gospels, Jesus first appears after the Resurrection to Mary Magdalene. This would certainly seem to make a point about the position of women in the Jesus movement, some scholars say, and would also bolster a claim to female authority in Christian affairs—at the time of Jesus or later. Others note, however, that the account of the Resurrection in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, which was written at least twenty years before the Gospels existed in written form, makes no mention of Mary Magdalene or indeed of any women, and it makes no mention of the empty-tomb tradition.

What is going on? One possibility, of course, is that in his account Paul is deliberately ignoring a tradition he is fully aware of—perhaps so as not to deflect emphasis from the authority of men (and himself). This could suggest that the process of diminishing the authority of women in Christianity began at a very early date. If that is



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the case, the survival of the women-at-the-empty-tomb tradition in the Gospels—decades after Paul—suggests its sheer durability. Thus we should perhaps take at face value, after all, what the Gospels have to say about the prominent position of women in the Jesus movement.

But wait: What if Paul was unaware of the empty-tomb tradition? What if, indeed, it arose *after* Paul—arose, as some have ventured, in conjunction with a growing belief among Christians in the prospect of a physical resurrection of an uncorrupted body after death, a belief that Paul himself would have regarded as crudely simplistic, whether applied to Jesus' Resurrection or to a more general resurrection of the dead? If the tradition did arise after Paul, Kraemer argues, then casting women as the first to see the empty tomb might have subtly helped to explain why it took so long for the good news about the physical Resurrection of Jesus to spread: because they were women, the original witnesses had been afraid to divulge what they knew, or had been widely disbelieved. In either case, of course, the result is an implicit denigration of women.

The situation is something of a mess. As Kraemer points out in her book *Her Share of the Blessings*, the basic problem is that "early Christian communities, especially after the death of Jesus, experienced considerable conflict over the appropriate roles of women, and tended to retroject their positions about this conflict back onto the stories they told about the women who encountered the earthly Jesus."

Her Share of the Blessings is a wide-ranging exploration of the role of women in Greco-Roman religions—pagan, Jewish, Christian—from about the fourth century B.C. to the fifth century A.D. The comparative approach Kraemer takes has great advantages, allowing her to see how structures in one realm may have influenced those in another. If she believes that, for whatever reason, early Christianity was more egalitarian in terms of gender than it later became—and she does—it is not only because of the interpretation she accepts of early Christian writings. She knows also from looking at the larger context that it was not unusual for women to hold cultic office in pagan religion, not unusual for them to play the role of patron. In light of the social mores of the time, the emphasis in much of early Christianity on sexual asceticism would also have served to enhance female independence: it offered free women a radical new option, a door to open other than the traditional one of marriage and childbearing and domesticity. Another force conducive to egalitarianism was the expectation among many early Christians that the present earthly order would soon pass—that the Lord was about to return in glory. In such a climate attachment to social structures that were plainly "of the world" was considerably lessened. Did women serve as priests? The formal establishment of a priesthood in Christianity came very late, Kraemer writes, but a diverse body of evidence shows that women in early Christianity

held the title *presbytera*, and that people who held this title performed all priestly functions: they taught, they baptized, they blessed the Eucharist.

There are, of course, tensions. One cannot read very far into the writings of Paul without becoming aware of his inner conflict when it came to questions of gender and sexuality. George Bernard Shaw once characterized Paul as the "eternal enemy of woman." In the epistle to the Galatians, Paul embraced an egalitarian formula, but in I Corinthians he showed himself to be clearly disturbed by the powerful and independent women in the Christian community at Corinth. He did not forbid the Corinthian women from prophesying, but he demanded that they cover their heads when they prayed in public, and he added a statement that defines women as subordinate to men. Is this last statement (along with some other problematic passages) a later interpolation, as some scholars believe? Perhaps. But tensions exist nonetheless, Kraemer writes, and they become deeper and more intolerable as Christianity moves further away in time from its origins, and moves closer to the contemporaneous social establishment.

Conflicting perspectives on women are apparent in later writings. One perspective is embodied in the apocryphal Acts of Thecla, probably written in the second century A.D., which celebrates the life of an ascetic female missionary supposedly sent out by Paul himself to teach and spread the word of the Lord. The Acts of Thecla, it must be said, has many decidedly odd elements (for example, Thecla is described as baptizing herself by jumping into a pool of hungry seals), but this text and many others like it enjoyed wide popularity. The other perspective is embodied, for example, in the epistles to Timothy, written in the second century, which contain some of the most stringent passages about women in the New Testament, passages that were then ascribed to Paul:

Let a woman learn in silence with full submission. I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she is to keep silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor.

This is the perspective that hardened when Christianity became the religion of the Roman state.

Women Who Lead

WAS JUNIA, WHOM PAUL, IN HIS EPISTLE TO the Romans, called "prominent among the apostles," a man or a woman? What about the person named Jael, who is referred to in an inscription from Aphrodisias, in Asia Minor, as being the presiding officer or patron of a Jewish community there? These questions are not academic. They speak to issues of gender, status, and leadership.

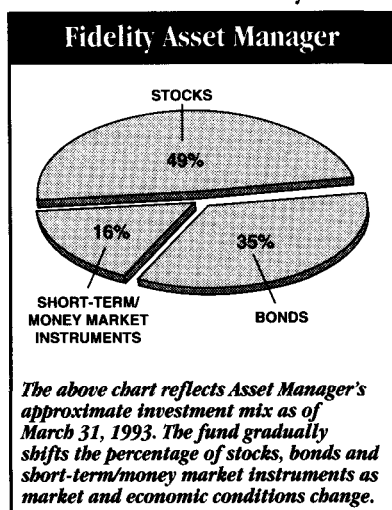
Some would argue that Junia and Jael had to have been

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men. How, after all, could a woman be a Christian apostle or the presiding officer of a Jewish community, when we know that women were barred from such honors? This is the kind of reasoning that brings a note of both excitement and exasperation to Bernadette Brooten's voice. Brooten is a professor of Scripture and interpretation at the Harvard Divinity School and the woman who made the study of Greek and Latin inscriptions which Ross Kraemer referred to. This fall she will join the faculty at Brandeis University. It is bad enough, Brooten said during a conversation one day, for women to be invisible in ancient Judaism and Christianity because men didn't think to mention them or because they weren't in a position to be mentioned. Must we also argue away the few women in plain sight?

Junia was a common female name in the ancient world, Brooten said. Several ancient religious commentators, such as Origen of Alexandria and John Chrysostom, assumed as a matter of course that the Junia mentioned in Romans was a woman. This assumption prevailed until the Middle Ages. Then a reaction set in. Paul reserved the title "apostle" for persons of great authority—people who had served as missionaries and founded churches. To a medieval mind, such people had to have been men. Junia underwent a change of sex. Later Martin Luther popularized a reinterpretation of Junia as *Junias*, an apparently masculine name—the diminutive, perhaps, as scholars would later speculate, of Junianius or Junilius. There is only one problem, Brooten said. The name *Junias* cannot be found in antiquity: not on documents, not in inscriptions. It does not exist as a name, diminutive or otherwise. All that we have is Junia, a common name for a woman—in this case, the name of a woman "prominent among the apostles."

As for the name Jael, Brooten said, the only reason the question of gender has come up at all is that there is an important title attached to the name, and the name sits at the top of a list of other names, all of which are male. In less politically charged circumstances, this Jael would simply have been assumed to be a woman. Jael was—is—a well-known woman's name. A woman named Jael is prominent in Judges. But scholars have hunted through Scripture and other ancient sources to see if they can find precedent for a Jael who is a man, because it seems to them so unlikely that this Jael could have been a woman. In some manuscripts of the Book of Ezra, as it appears in the Septuagint, they have found such a Jael. The name is in a list of male exiles who had married foreign women and were now repudiating them upon their return to Israel. The identification is highly tentative, however. The Septuagint is the Hebrew Bible as translated into Greek, and the transliteration of Semitic names from Hebrew into Greek is haphazard and inconsistent. What this means, Brooten went on, is that to take Jael as a man's name one has to accept an instance that may be nothing more than an artifact of transliteration. One has to prefer this to the

attestation of Jael as female in a major book of the Bible, the name being that of a well-known figure whose story was probably a staple of synagogue readings.

"All of which," Brooten said, "raises several questions for me. How many women do there have to have been for there to have been any? And if it's part of the marginalization of women that women are very rarely leaders to begin with, then even in those circumstances in which women do occur as leaders, they may be either perceived as not being women or perceived as not being leaders." The note of frustration in Brooten's voice gave way to something slyer as she summoned up an image of scholars one day confronting a document that referred to Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and the members of one of her all-male Cabinets. It would be only a matter of time, Brooten said, before some scholar came along and pronounced Thatcher a man.

HARVARD DIVINITY SCHOOL IS ONE OF THE MANY divinity schools to whose revival an influx of women has contributed greatly. Applicants are plentiful, with women accounting for well over half the enrollment in the school's various programs. Whatever this portends for the future, women as yet remain distinctly underrepresented among the school's senior faculty.

Brooten joined the Harvard faculty in 1985. She had received her doctorate from Harvard a few years earlier, and in the intervening period had taught at Claremont. Part of her academic training took place in Tübingen, the cobbled and timbered university town in Germany whose name has long been associated with new departures in theology. She describes the German academic environment for women in much the same way Schüssler Fiorenza does. "German theologians," Brooten told me, "will just say outright that they don't want women." Oddly, though, Tübingen is where Brooten took her first women's-studies course: Leonard Swidler, on leave from Temple, happened to be a visiting professor there for a year, and offered a seminar on women and the Church. Brooten was one of two students who signed up for it. "In the university as a whole," she recalled, "there was no interest in such things at all."

Brooten's office at Harvard has the dusky flavor of a Dickensian garret. Narrow pathways thread among tumuli of tables and books. Some of the books are old, spines worn to a dull sheen by centuries of palms. There is not even a computer to suggest the late twentieth century, though Brooten does use one at home. It is now standard in the field to have computer software that can print in Greek, Hebrew, and Coptic fonts. Computers have also made some kinds of research much easier for biblical scholars. For example, the great bulk of the writing that survives from antiquity in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew—not just works of literature but also snippets from tens of thousands of papyrus fragments and stone inscriptions—is now available on CD-ROM.

A capsule summary of the implications of Brooten's earliest research might read like this: with respect to roles played by women, there was more differentiation within Judaism in the Greco-Roman world than many scholars acknowledge. This touches on a highly sensitive issue. Some scholars, particularly among those who want a liberalization of Christian church policies concerning women, have argued that if early Christianity fell short of an egalitarian ideal, the cause lay in part in the nature of the Jewish world out of which Christianity emerged. Thus, one argument runs, there might have been more women leaders in Christianity if only there had been more in Judaism. Looking at the matter another way, to the degree that egalitarianism did exist in early Christianity, it is sometimes presented as a sharp break from Jewish tradition. Often implicit, this kind of thinking amounts, in the view of some, to locating the origins of patriarchal misogyny in the Hebrew Bible and those who inhabited its shadow. That is perhaps stating the problem too unsightly, but it exposes a place where the nerve is raw. Brooten's view is that the spectrum of tolerable practice among Jews in ancient times was broad—just as it is in modern Judaism, just as it was and is in Christianity.

In her doctoral dissertation, later published in book form as *Women Leaders in the Ancient Synagogue*, Brooten considered nineteen carved inscriptions dating from as early as 27 B.C. to as late as the sixth century A.D., in which Jewish women are accorded official titles relating to the communal life of a synagogue—titles such as “head of the synagogue,” “leader,” “elder.” Titles like these, when applied to women, had long been interpreted as honorific rather than functional. “Rufina, a Jewess, head of the synagogue, built this tomb for her freed slaves and the slaves raised in her house”—these words come from a marble plaque, inscribed in the second century A.D., that was found in Smyrna. The traditional view has been that Rufina, the “head of the synagogue,” the *archisynagogos*, had no real functional authority and was in all likelihood merely the wife of the true *archisynagogos*. Rufina is seen to have the title, as Brooten wryly notes, “*honoris causa*.” In dense, meticulous arguments that cannot be reviewed here, Brooten mounts an assault on that view. She takes up the cases of Rufina and the eighteen other women, and exposes what she deems to be the flawed presuppositions and tortured reasoning necessary to conclude that their titles were not functional. Women leaders of the synagogue were, of course, never the norm and were perhaps always the great exception. But, Brooten states, it is wrong to see the emergence of women leaders in Christianity as unprecedented.

Brooten's more recent work involves the writings of Paul, in particular his views on the proper place of women in society and where those views came from. One clue lies in Paul's condemnations of same-sex love. As Brooten explains, in a discussion that draws not only on religious texts but also on ancient materials as diverse as

medical and astrological writings, Paul was in this regard no more than a man of his time. Whatever the exceptions in practice, on the normative gender map of the Roman world some behavior is appropriately masculine and some appropriately feminine, and the line is not supposed to be crossed. In sexual relations between members of the same sex this distinction is violated. One man becomes “like a woman”; one woman becomes “like a man.” Underlying all this was a world view that, Brooten argues, saw the distinction between “active” and “passive” as more fundamental even than distinctions of sex. It was the basis of social order and social hierarchy. It was

the origin of the tension in Paul. Forward-looking in many ways, Paul could not let it go.

“Paul was happy to work with women as colleagues, and encouraged them,” Brooten said. “So, for example, he mentions Junia, and he acknowledges Prisca and Tryphæna and Tryphosa and Persis and other women. He teaches with them, and he recognizes their prophecy, and he works with them as missionaries in the Roman world. On the other hand, while he was very willing to make a religious and societal break with Jewish tradition on points that were considered very central to Judaism, such as the issue of dietary laws and the circumcision of men, in order to permit Jew and Gentile to come together alike to accept Jesus as the Christ, with some cus-

tom concerns concerning women he's not willing to make that kind of break. For example, the issue of the hairstyling and veiling of women. And, indeed, at that very point in the text he describes Christ as the head of man, and man as the head of woman, which goes beyond tolerating a custom and gives a theological underpinning to gender differentiation. I see his position as essentially ambivalent. On certain issues—gender, slavery, Roman power—he is very much interested in maintaining social order. But what's fascinating about Paul is that he experiments.”

Toward the end of a long conversation we lingered for a moment on the nature of that first-century world of which Paul was a part: a world that those who know it

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well describe as more alien from our own in its psychology and belief systems and outlook than we imagine. How confident do you feel, I asked Brooten, that we can span the gulf between these two cultures, ours and theirs—can reconstruct something trustworthy about the dynamics of *then*?

“That’s something I ask myself about all the time,” Brooten said. And then she laughed. “I’ve often had this thought: that I’ll die, and go to heaven, and Rufina will meet me, and I’ll greet her as *archisynagogos*. And she’ll say, ‘*Archisynagogos*? Nah. That was just my husband’s title.’”

The Writing on the Wall

TO FOCUS ON THE WORK OF A HANDFUL OF scholars is necessarily to leave aside the work of scores of others. And there are, literally, scores. Their research by now covers just about every conceivable aspect of the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament. It has spread deeply into the fields of history and theology and literary criticism. I once asked David Tracy, the prominent Catholic theologian, what he thought would be the result of feminism’s encounter with religion, and he said simply, “The next intellectual revolution.” That assessment may sound overblown, but it isn’t. Phyllis Tribble used the metaphor of a conversation between feminism and the Bible. Feminism’s larger conversation with religion touches every aspect of it, leaves no subject off the table. It engages doctrine, liturgy, ministry, and leadership, and it engages them all at once.

Scholarly work on women and the Bible faces certain inherent problems, certain inherent risks. In my talks with people in the field, the same worries were voiced by one scholar after another. A fundamental one has to do with the distinction between deriving an interpretation *from* a text and reading an interpretation *into* a text. It is one thing for a contemporary personal agenda—a desire, say, to see women enjoy a position of full equality in religious institutions—to direct one’s research focus. Agendas of one sort or another frequently drive scholarship. But can’t they also get out of hand? Another concern is an issue raised by Bernadette Brooten: the sometimes facile comparisons made between Christianity and Judaism. This has already begun to stir animosity outside the field of biblical studies, as evidenced by an eloquent recent essay in the Jewish bimonthly *Tikkun*.

The range of scholarly output on matters involving women and the Bible has been enormously diverse. As in any academic endeavor, the work has been of uneven quality. Much of the research remains tentative and preliminary, and there are severe limits, given the sparseness

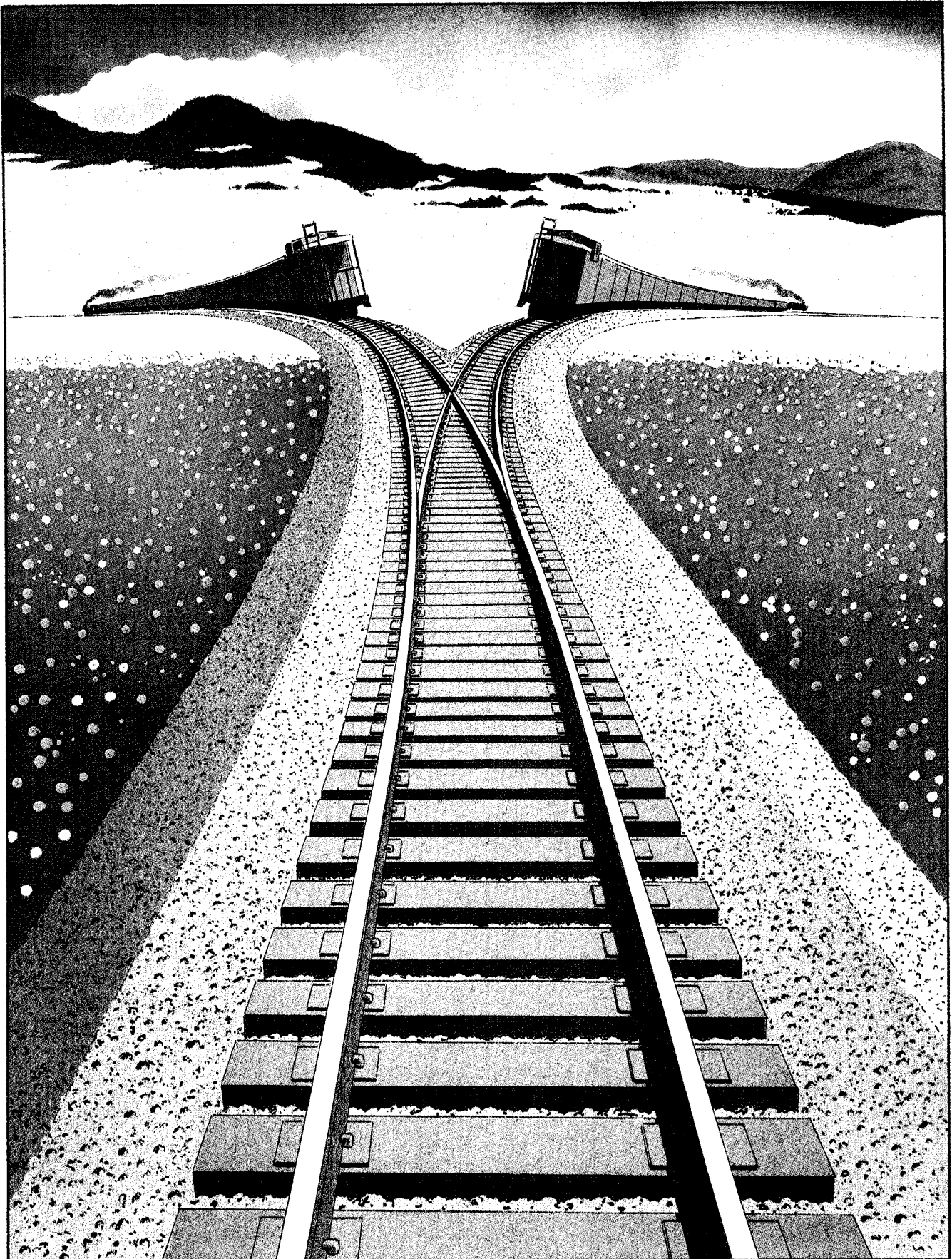
of what is likely to be the available evidence, to what can ever be known with certainty. The most we can hope for, Bernadette Brooten has written, is “a quick glimpse through a crack in the door.” What has been accomplished thus far? One achievement is simply the staking out of ground. Several decades ago no one was particularly concerned—indeed, the thought rarely occurred to anyone—that the entire academic biblical enterprise was based on what was known about men’s lives, was one that generalized from men to all humanity. Those days are gone. Another achievement has been a new emphasis on the sheer variety of thought and practice which sometimes existed within ancient religious groups. Scholars who perhaps went searching after some lost Golden Age—driven by the “earlier-is-better” bias that seems to be a characteristic of human thought—have stumbled into worlds that are more confused and complex than they may have anticipated, worlds that are in that sense not unlike our own. Yet another achievement is simply this: leaving aside the specific details, scholars have gone a long way toward bringing women in biblical and early Christian times into sharper relief. They have also shown how meaning has been shaded by the lacquer of interpretation. A good distillation of much of the research on women can be found in *The Women’s Bible Commentary*, edited by Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe.

Perhaps the most important lesson offered by the work of feminist biblical scholars comes in the form of a reminder: that in religion, as in other spheres, circumstances have not always been as we see them now. Evolution occurs. Some things, it turns out, are *not* sacred. This point may be obvious, but with respect to religion, especially, it is frequently overlooked—and, in fact, sometimes hotly denied. Whatever one believes about the nature of their origin, the handful of immutable precepts at any religion’s core are embedded in a vast pulp of tradition, interpretation, and practice. And that pulp bears an all-too-human character. It is variously diminished, augmented, scarred, sculpted, and otherwise shaped by powerful human forces in every society and every time period through which it passes. Sometimes the change occurs slowly and almost invisibly. Sometimes it happens quickly and right before one’s eyes, as I believe it is happening now—the proliferation of feminist scholarship on the Bible being both consequence and cause.

I write these last words on the day of my daughter’s first communion in a denomination that still restricts the role of women, and I write them in the expectation that with respect to the position of women, matters will not remain—will simply not be able to remain—as in some places we see them now; in the expectation, to employ a biblical turn, that the present way’s days are numbered. □

INDECISION

BY GUY BILLOUT

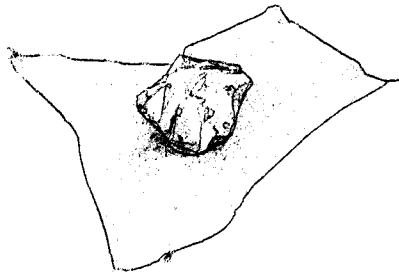


A Short Story



Pipa's Story

by Lan Samantha Chang



MY MOTHER WORKED IN CHARMS. SHE COULD brew a drink to brighten eyes or warm the womb. She knew of a douche that would likely bring a male child, and a potion to chase away unborn children. Except in emergencies, she gathered her own herbs and animal parts. I was not allowed to help.

The villagers said she had learned her craft from a Miao tribeswoman. A group of Miao—strangers from the west—had stayed in our village for a few months shortly after my father's death. My mother had mixed potions to forget, wandering in the woods to learn where mushrooms grew. My earliest memories are of watching the smoke from her kettle: white smoke, blue, gray, and black smoke.

When I was a child, she seemed all-powerful, and although time passed and I grew tall, she continued to loom over me until I thought I would disappear if I could not get away from her shadow. When I was nineteen, I decided to leave the village. For four days I watched my mother stir a mixture over the stove kettle. On the fourth evening I gathered the courage to tell her.

"I will go to Shanghai and work for a family there," I said to her back. "I'll send you an envelope filled with money at New Year."

My mother added a bowl of ice that hissed and crack-

led against whatever was in the pot. Then she turned to look into me. I forced myself to look back into her black eyes.

"Sit down," she told me, gesturing to the wooden chair by the window.

I sat and watched her strain the cooling potion into a wooden bowl. Then she unbraided my hair and combed it, dipping the comb into the potion. It was a warm evening in early spring. The half-moon gave us light.

"What is the potion?" I said.

"It is a mixture to make you ready for departure."

*She promised her mother
she would find the center of her master's house
and hide there a piece of pinkish
stone. This, her mother said, would bring
to an end an old, old story*

I lost a breath. My mother tugged and pulled at me, braiding my hair into a four-stranded plait.

"There are herbs here that will protect you against bodily harm from illness, loss of en-

ergy, and unclear thinking. There are also herbs that will fix your memory, your past. You will never forget me here, no matter how far away you go."

She wrapped the end of my braid around and around with red thread. "You want to leave," she said. "You have my permission if you make one promise to me."

"I promise," I said. Anything if she would let me go.

She looked out the window to make sure that no one was standing by. "Come here," she said. I followed her to a corner of the room, where it was dark.

Three steps from the corner my mother knelt down and

began digging into the dirt with a spoon. She unearthed a small box, muddy but with dull tin showing in patches. We walked to the window, where we could see. My mother opened the box, took something out, and handed it to me. It was a lump, smaller than the palm of my hand, wrapped in rough cotton.

"Open it," she said.

I unfolded the cloth. Inside glowed a pinkish stone, a craggy piece of our mountain.

"Lao Fu will take you to Shanghai," my mother said. "Find work with a family named Wen. They have a large household and probably many servants. You're still rough, straight from the country, and they may not want to hire you, but I'm sure you can persuade them. Don't tell them that you're from this village, and don't tell them my name."

"Why not?" I said.

"That doesn't concern you. If you don't like working for the Wens, you may leave and go wherever you like, but before you leave, you must do one thing for me."

"What is it?"

"Find the heart of the house," she said. "It's a huge, modern place, I'm sure. Wen will have become involved with Western business, and he will have a large Western house. You'll have to spend some time searching. Let the house seep around you; listen for its rhythm. Before three months are up, find the center and hide this stone there."

"What are you talking about?" I said rudely. "I never learned anything about houses. You never told me. How would I know?"

My mother didn't scold me but squatted on the floor and looked into the beam of pale moonlight.



"Tell me," she said, "where the heart of our own house is."

I thought for a minute. Then I pointed to the middle of the floor.

"No," she said. "The physical center is not what I mean."

I sighed. Our house—a hut, really—was quite small, and as far as I could tell had no other center. We had a table, our beds, some rickety chairs. The corner shelf held storybooks, *Dream of the Red Chamber* and *Outlaws of the Marsh*, that my mother had been teaching me to read for years. Our house had no male presence, because my father had died before I was born. My mother earned our living. I thought about my mother, her long gray braid hanging down her back, hunched before the stove kettle full of glowing coals.

"The fire," I said. "The stove is the heart of our house."

My mother nodded. "Good," she said.

At her praise I felt cold and heavy. "What is this about?"

She shook her head. "It's better if you don't know," she said. "It began before you were born. Your deed will be

the end of it." She stood up and walked to the window again. "It's something that happened long ago."

LEFT WITH THE STONE SEWN INTO MY POCKET. I rode in a cart with Lao Fu, my mother's old friend, who was bringing ginseng to sell around the city. The precious roots grew wild on the mountains.

I watched Lao Fu's thick, arthritic hands on the reins, carelessly guiding his spotted horse. Now and then he flicked a tattered whip. In those days the trip to Shanghai

took weeks. Lao Fu didn't usually make such long trips. He was taking me as a favor to my mother, who often rubbed an ointment into his knuckles. We didn't speak for hours, by which time the most familiar mountains had grown pale blue in the distance and we were surrounded by shapes I had seen before only from far away. Then Lao Fu turned an eye to me.

"You're a *nenggan* girl, Pipa," he said in his rusty, wheezing voice. "A capable, dutiful girl. Traveling hundreds of miles in order to help your mother."

He smiled kindly, exposing four brown teeth. I glared at the stains on his gray beard and wished that someone else were driving me, someone I had never met. Even in this remote region the lines of the surrounding hills seemed to shape my mother's face. The stone in my pocket, my secret, weighed so heavily I could hardly sit upright. I wanted to rip it out of my smock and fling it into the next river. She would never know.

But when we reached Shanghai, I felt so terrified by my first view of the great port that I held on to the stone like a talisman. I sat close to Lao Fu, dreading our approach to the Wen house, where he would leave me. The city seemed to whirl past. The wide streets were cluttered with travelers—in carts like ours, but also in rickshaws and automobiles. I had never seen either before, nor had I seen the kind of people, foreigners, who rode in them.

In those days foreigners were everywhere: stiff soldiers in uniforms from England and America, businessmen from Russia, hurrying in and out of large, square, Western buildings. I sat paralyzed, blocking my ears against the roaring, honking automobiles. I turned away from the rickshawmen, their faces drawn, their feet slap-slapping against the pavement. We stopped at an intersection. I saw a man with yellow eyes lurch toward our cart. Lao Fu twitched his whip in that direction. "Opium," he said. "Don't look."

On another corner I spotted a powerfully built Chinese man dressed in Western clothes, his short, glossy hair oiled back from his forehead. He was talking to three foreigners, standing as straight as any of them. For a moment he seemed to stare at our cart, at Lao Fu adjusting a strap on the harness. Then he looked away.

As we went on, the shops and businesses gave way to houses: tall brick boxes set back from the road, with no round doorways or Chinese gardens. Shining black automobiles veered around us. One of them nearly struck the horse. I turned to Lao Fu in alarm, but he merely shook his head and guided our cart closer to the side of the road.

"Lao Fu, where are we?"

"Close."

After one more street he turned to our right. The horse clip-clopped around a long bend, and suddenly we were twenty yards from an entrance to an immense house built of brick and wood. I spotted a woman watching us from a window. Lao Fu stopped the cart.

"Here you are, Pipa. That door is the servants' entrance." I stared at my lap. "*Xialai*. Get down. I'll take your bundle."

I climbed from the cart, my legs stiff, my left hand clutching the stone in my pocket. Lao Fu came around the back of the cart holding my blue cotton bundle.

"Go in," he said. I wrinkled my mouth to hold back tears. "You will be all right," he said. "I'll be in the surrounding towns for a few months. I'll come visit you."

We faced each other and bobbed our heads. Lao Fu climbed back onto his cart and picked up the reins in his gnarled hands. He nodded again before turning away.

I stood watching his cart go back around the bend. I realized that I had said good-bye to the last of the village, and to my mother. After years of avoiding her sight I had gone to a place where she could not see me. Suddenly I was filled with an emotion so terrible that I turned and vomited at the side of the road.

A VERY PRETTY GIRL STOOD AT THE SERVANTS' door, waiting. She wore black pants and a clean white blouse. From the way her hair was done, I guessed that she had been the one looking out the window.

"Are you all right?" she asked in a low, pleasant voice. Close up, I stood a head taller than she.

"Yes," I said. I clutched my bundle. "I want to work here."

Her eyes darted over my rough cotton clothes. "Come in," she said. "Clean up inside. You should bathe, and change. Then I'll introduce you to the housekeeper."

I walked inside the great house and smelled the warm, rich odor of food and spices. We stood in a square room lined with wood. A door to my right opened into a hallway. I could see at the end a room where a number of people were chopping vegetables.

"Come here quickly," whispered the girl, darting toward another doorway. She led me to a very white, shining room with a long white basin on four feet. I had never seen a bathtub before, and I stopped to stare. The girl, who said her name was Meisi, turned two silver fixtures at one end of the tub, and out of them poured steaming water. She held a huge towel in front of me so that I wouldn't be embarrassed while she stayed in the room.

I took off my dirty traveling clothes and stepped into the tub. The warm water rushed around my body, erasing the village dirt. I unbraided my hair, and my mother's spells were washed away in a swirl of steam. I felt myself changing, like a tadpole, and I looked at my hands and limbs as if they were new.

Behind her towel Meisi chattered away.

"Of course they'll hire you; the family just moved into this new residence, and they need servants. They hired me only three months ago. I'll have you fixed up so that no one will think twice."

"Why did you come to work here?" I said.

"I'm from Beijing. My mother died giving birth to me, and my father was in the Kuomintang army. He died last year in the fighting. I am an orphan. I had to find work. This is a good place. The master is rich and good-looking. Supervision is not very strict."

After a minute I said, "Fighting? What fighting?"

"You really are from far away! There's been terrible fighting, not in Shanghai, but maybe soon!" Her voice dropped, and I had to lean close to the towel in order to hear.

"I don't know anything about these events," I said. "Our village is so remote, even the Japanese ignored it."

When I was finished, she found a pair of black trousers and a white shirt that were both a little too small for me. "We'll get some others after you've started," she said. "I'll steal them from the closet."

"Thank you for helping me," I said.

Meisi smiled. "This is nothing," she answered. "There is plenty here; why not share it? And besides, you look like a nice person." She picked up my old blue cotton smock. "Do you want this saved?"

I thought of the stone sewn into the pocket. "No," I said.

THE WENS LIVED ON ONE OF THE MOST STYLISH new streets in Shanghai. For weeks I marveled at their house; I had never even dreamed of anything like it. The rooms were broad and tall, with glossy, patterned wooden floors built by English carpenters and covered with flowered Persian carpets. English curtains draped down by long windows, blood-red velvet curtains with gold-colored tasseled cords. Everything in that house was new, from the mysterious electric lights to the great wooden tubs in the kitchen, filled with live clams in salt water in case one of the family should have a craving for them.

The housekeeper, Lu Taitai, was an immense older woman whose face lay as still as a mud bog. When she was very angry, she would slowly lift one fat finger into the air. I lived in terror of her. I was the newest of thirty servants, so unskilled that at first I worked in the servants' quarters, which, as Meisi pointed out, had to be kept clean along with the rest of the house. Meisi's swift hands and pretty face had earned her a job on the third floor, where the family lived. I imagined that the upstairs must be a magical place.

"Can you show me the upper floors?" I asked her once, as we ate dinner at one end of the long servants' table.

She looked right and left before answering. "We have to watch out for Lu Taitai," she said. "And it's harder to get away with things upstairs. The women have sharp eyes. If I have a chance, I'll take you."

"What women?" I said. "The servant women?"

Meisi put down her chopsticks. "Pipa," she said, "the

master has four wives." She smiled. "Stop blushing, and keep eating."

I looked at the table. We ate what the Wens left. The night before, they had feasted on duck done ten ways, and there was a pile of crackling duck skins, which I had discovered I particularly liked. There were also jelled duck eggs, pigeon eggs in sauce, shrimps with chicken and peas, chicken and scallops with ginger, scallops in sauce, salted prawns, spicy prawns, late oysters, early asparagus, several other vegetable dishes, and a great fish that lay on its side, barely touched. I thought that if a man was wealthy enough to serve four dishes for each member of the family, then perhaps four wives was to be expected.

A FEW WEEKS LATER LU TAITAI WAS SUDDENLY called away to her home province.

"Good," Meisi said. By flirting with the second housekeeper, she arranged for me to bring tea to the master upstairs in his library, during a meeting with some of his Western associates.

"If it weren't for you, I would be lost," I said when I thanked her. "I've been here for a month and I've never seen him."

"Well," she said, "he's very good-looking. I can see why the women fall for him: rich, handsome, and powerful! Of course, he seldom looks at people like you and me—we can only watch. But if that's what you want, my dear friend Pipa, you shall have it." And she made me practice several times with the bamboo tea tray.

On the day of the meeting we waited to hear the men's heavy shoes start up the staircase. "Go up now," Meisi said. She fixed some of the coarse hair that constantly escaped from my pinned-up braids. The cook's assistant stared with grim disapproval while I balanced the tray.

For the first time I climbed the polished staircase.

The second floor was quiet. The carpet melted under my feet. Meisi had instructed me: "Turn left at the top, go down two doors, and you've reached the library." The heavy, unfamiliar tray hindered my progress; delicate teacups slid on their bits of lace. I reached the library door, braced the tray as securely as possible against my hip, and knocked.

"Come in," said a resonant male voice.

I looked at the big china knob. How could I possibly turn it? I moved to brace my feet and felt the smooth wooden tray slide against my blouse.

Suddenly the door opened and a man stood over me, holding a book in one hand. For a moment I forgot my manners and stared at him. I had seen him before: the arrogant man whom I had noticed while riding with Lao Fu on my first day in Shanghai. Now he stood and looked at my face, my blouse, my hands holding the tray. I felt as if a piece of burning ash had been put down my back. I



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gasped; the tray tilted in my hands. The house with its soft rugs fought against me, making me lose my balance. Hot tea spilled on the master's arm and over the book he carried.

"*Duibugi*," I gasped, hastily putting down the ruined tray. I grabbed an embroidered linen napkin and reached to dry his arm.

"I'm fine," he said. "Dry this." He handed me the book, and even in my horror it occurred to me that this man must have strength not to so much as flinch at the boiling water. I waited for him to scold me, or even strike me, but he did not move.

"*Duibugi*," I repeated, and indeed at that moment I did not think I could ever look him in the face again. I wiped the pages. "*Xianggang Falu*," I read aloud. Why was he studying Hong Kong laws?

"You can read," he said.

"My mother taught me," I blurted out.

"Then you'll still be of some use to us," he said. "It's obvious you're not a good maid. Come in."

I tiptoed into the room. Opposite me stood three crowded bookshelves. The foreigners sat at the end, before the fireplace.

"You're tall," Wen said. "You can read. Find the books I want and bring them over. Find me the volume about transportation on the Yangtze and the Grand Canal."

I turned toward the shelves, my hands sweating. Wen went back to the fireplace.

"If you want factual proof, I'll give it to you," I heard him say to the foreigners. "But I guarantee, they'll wait. They've won too many battles too quickly. They need to regroup. It will be months before they reach Shanghai, maybe a year. You needn't worry."

Someone coughed. "Oh, certainly, certainly." This man spoke Chinese with difficulty. "It's just that we have received some—reports from farther north. Of course," he continued, searching for the words, "we're not worried about them. The Kuomintang troops have regrouped themselves to defend our side of the Yangtze . . . We are just—making sure that we understand the situation."

"Those who flee are fools," Wen said. "I tell you, it's not time to leave yet. They would never touch a foreigner. Remember, the longer you stay, the more you'll make."

"And you as well," one of the men said.

"You can believe me." Wen's voice grew hard. "I know what Mao will do. I'm one of them. I was born a peasant, you know."

In the bottom right corner of the shelf I spotted a blue volume on waterways, which I pulled and brought to Wen. I watched for a minute as he studied the book, the firelight flickering on his face, and I could sense his force, his intelligence and cunning.

"Ha!" he said, pointing to a paragraph of characters. "You see, I was correct." He showed the book to one of the Western gentlemen, who squinted, nervously stroking his blond beard.

"What does it say, Stanton?" one of them asked.

"Ah, yes! Mr. Wen is correct," Stanton said. I wondered if he could read characters well enough to know what he was talking about.

"Now," Wen said, "about those collections. I'll have the first half to you by Monday next week." He turned to me. "You can go now," he said. "I'll call you the next time there is a meeting."

As I left the library, I saw the tea tray sitting in the hallway. I bent down to pick it up.

"What are you doing?" said a musical, imperious voice.

I straightened. I had not heard her walk across the carpet. She was tiny, beautiful, with large eyes and a curved lower lip like an orange slice. She wore a *qipao* of shimmering sea-green silk.

"I came with the tea," I tried to explain. "I was helping in the library."

"*Helping*," she said. Her eyes flickered up and down my body.

"Getting books."

Her lower lip swelled with dissatisfaction. She walked past me to the library door. "Are they still inside?"

I nodded.

She lifted her chin. "Hmph!" she said. "Get back downstairs."

I picked up the tray and hurried away, cold tea splashing on the carpet.

Downstairs Meisi waited for me.

"I was worried!" she cried. But when I explained what had happened, she smiled and patted my arm. "Now you've earned your job in the house. No more rag-pushing for you!" Her eyes sparkled.

"YOUR MOTHER WILL WANT TO KNOW HOW you are doing," Lao Fu said.

I didn't answer. Lao Fu guided his horse past two arguing street peddlers. He had returned to the city and come by to take me on a ride. I felt ashamed that the others would see me with him, with his patched clothes and shabby cart. But it was a beautiful day in May. The fresh warm air reminded me how seldom I had a chance to go outside, now that I was working at the Wen house.

"Before we left, she asked me to check on you," Lao Fu said, "and to ask you if you kept your promise."

"Why is everything so crowded?" I said, changing the subject. Even on the quieter streets we could not drive in a straight line.

"In the past few months more and more people north of us have fled the Red Army, seeking safety."

"Where is the army now?"

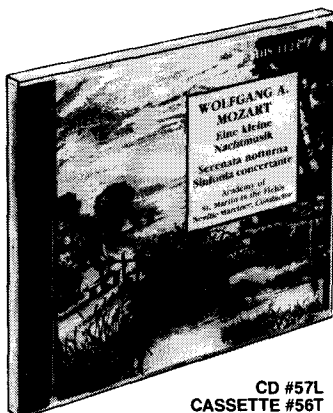
"Since the end of the year it has been waiting north of the Yangtze River."

I remembered the conversation in the library. "What will happen when it moves south again?"



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Lao Fu looked at me, and I saw his cloudy cataracts. "Things will change."

"How will they change?"

"Ah," he said. "Who knows? These days I demand silver in payment. The Kuomintang is crumbling. Why won't you answer your mother's question?"

"I don't have time to think about her anymore," I said.

Lao Fu ignored me. "Look over there," he said. "A decent noodle house, and not too busy. Let's have lunch."

After we had taken care of the cart and horse, we stood for a minute outside the noodle shop, watching the people on the street. A thin man carrying a large wicker basket shuffled close to us. "*Zhuan qian, zhuan qian*," he repeated under his breath. Lao Fu nodded and handed him a piece of silver. The man opened his basket and counted out sixteen bundles of paper money. They nodded at each other, and we entered the dark, noisy noodle shop.

"You see?" Lao Fu said as we sat down at a corner table. "By the time we leave, that coin will be worth sixteen and a half bundles of paper money."

I felt as if he were saying this to make a point against me. Stubbornly I folded my hands in my lap.

"What will happen when the Communist army reaches this city?" Lao Fu lit his long, large pipe. "They'll go after people like your master, rich people who flourished under the Kuomintang by working with foreign capitalists. There's a word for your master, Pipa. He's an *ermao-zí*, a comprador."

"He's a peasant," I said. "He's a former peasant who used his wits to make a fortune for himself, to move away from his village."

"Ha," Lao Fu said. He fitted the pipe between his four stubby teeth. "You're a young girl, Pipa. You're young, and the world is a strange place."

I scowled and took a sip of the tea that a greasy-haired, smudge-faced woman had flung on the table.

"What difference do his origins make to you?" I said. "You're here with a message from my mother. You don't know Master Wen or anything about him."

"But I do know him," Lao Fu said. "I used to know him well."

I stared at my wavering saucer of tea.

"When he was a young man in the village, we used to call him Xiao Niou, Little Bull. He was once a friend of your father's."

There was a terrible pounding in my ears. Lao Fu's rusty voice sounded like a shout. I waited for him to stop, but he continued. "Some people forget their histories, but they don't realize that others remember," he said. "Not everyone forgets the wrongs they've suffered."

He raised the saucer to his mouth. His loud slurp brought me back to my senses.

"What do you mean?" I forced out the words.

"Ah. Well, this is an old story. Something that happened before you were born. It is, shall I say, a village secret."

RED LEATHER JACKET

Had I not spoken first
when we met that clouded morning
after a broken night
in which we'd slept apart;

had I not stunned myself
at the start I underwent,
kindling at the sight
of you far across the park

(bright—so bright your jacket's
red on that dark day
whose fallen leaves were drifting
from brown to a final gray);

had I then, possessed by a flame
that stirred up the ashes of
a cool cover of pigeons,
not broken into a run

(past a row of frost-gripped benches
and a low, a wire-caught kite
that hung its head in shame),
and reached you almost breathless;

well, suppose I hadn't spoken
first, dipping my head
toward a spooneristic kiss
from you who glowed as red

as any Queen of Hearts,
hadn't cried, "My dear, you luck
like Lady Look herself!"
would *you* have managed better?

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"There aren't any secrets in the village."

"Well, it's possible. There were only four of us who knew. One died, one has forgotten, and two of us have chosen not to tell. That is, until now."

At that moment the woman brought us two broad, steaming bowls of noodle soup. Lao Fu nodded. "Good. Eat."

I took a spoonful of soup, waiting. The food and even the serving utensils were so much coarser than what I had grown used to.

Lao Fu began. "Your father and mother were the two village orphans. No one arranged their marriage. When they wed, it was a love match."

He took a mouthful of noodles and went on. My father, he said, was gentle and kind. He had spent years learning to read in his spare time; he sat and daydreamed over his tea. My mother was clever, forceful. She never rested. And she had an astounding talent that everyone in the village knew about. If an object was lost, my mother could almost always find it. On the mountains she understood the natural order and discovered more ginseng roots than anyone else. It was she who suggested that she and my father supplement their income by collecting ginseng roots. Xiao Niou and Lao Fu agreed to help them.

"There was one problem," Lao Fu said. "Perhaps because she was so sure of herself, your mother underestimated Xiao Niou. He was a ruthless, ambitious boy who wanted to be the best at everything. And the more he saw of your mother, the more he wanted her as well. He desired her. He wanted to stop her constant thinking and doing; he wanted her to think and do only for him."

"Your mother was not beautiful, but she had so much vitality that she was impossible to ignore. She knew that Xiao Niou wanted her, but she thought she could control him. This goaded Xiao Niou until he couldn't bear it."

One cloudy fall day the four of them had gone to gather ginseng. For part of the day they worked together. All morning Xiao Niou watched my mother out of the corner of his eye. After lunch my mother suggested that they split up and search on different parts of the mountain. And Xiao Niou suggested that he and my father go off together.

That afternoon the fog grew so thick that my mother and Lao Fu, working close together, could hardly see each other. It was very quiet. The path became almost impossible to find; trees and stones looked like people and animals. If not for my mother, Lao Fu said, they might not have found the pathway down the mountain, back to the village.

When they reached the village, my mother waited for Xiao Niou and my father to return. She built a fire, cooked dinner. But the other two did not come back. She began to worry. Finally, after the gray fog had turned dark, Xiao Niou stopped by our hut.

"Where's Dangbei?" he asked.

"What do you mean?" my mother said. "I thought he was with you."

"He left early," Xiao Niou told her. "He decided to go back to the village."

All that night my mother waited, but my father did not come home.

The next day my mother went out on the mountain, in the fog, searching for him. She looked and looked, but she could not find him. Finally some men from the village had to force her to stay inside—she was pregnant, after all. Then winter set in.

"All winter your mother mourned," Lao Fu said. "She would speak only to me and Xiao Niou. Xiao Niou asked her to marry him, but she refused to discuss anything until your father's body was discovered. That spring, right before you were born, the villagers found him at the bottom of a ravine, lying on a bed of pinkish quartz. After the birth your mother insisted on going up on the mountain and to the spot where they had found his body."

"Now here is the secret," Lao Fu said. "Your mother told only me. After seeing the site where your father's body was discovered, she felt certain that he had not gotten there on his own. If the two of them had gone to dig ginseng in the place Xiao Niou had described, your father would not have died where his body was found."

"How did she know?" I said. "On foggy days in our mountains, a person could wander anywhere."

"I asked her. 'I know Dangbei,' she said. 'He would never have gotten lost there,' she said. And I believed her. She knew the mountains. I felt foolish and angry. So much had been going on right under my nose, and I had not understood."

He looked at me. I ignored him, studying my soup. "I was younger in those days, and I hated being wrong about things," he said.

"That summer Xiao Niou again asked her to marry him. She accused him of killing Dangbei, and Xiao Niou left the village. He disappeared for years, and when we heard about him next, he had taken the name of Wen."

After this my mother had begun to brood before the stove, to speak to Miao travelers and learn their arts. She was unable to forget what had been lost.

"Now," Lao Fu said, when the story was finished and our bowls were empty, "when I return to the village, your mother will ask me if you have kept your promise to her."

I looked at him. He leaned toward me; a noodle hung from his beard. I felt my eyes grow hot with confusion and anger. I felt as if my inner world had been turned inside out. He had cast her shadow over me again, and I could not forgive him.

"Leave me alone!" I said. "You tell my mother that I will not keep my promise to her. None of this has anything to do with me. I'm far away, and she can't reach me. She can't make me do what I don't want to do. Besides, it's impossible now."

Lao Fu's wrinkled lids lowered. He nodded. "You do

what you must do. I'll be in the city another week—"

"Don't visit me anymore," I said.

BACK AT THE Wens' house the servants were getting ready for an important business dinner. I looked for Meisi. I wanted to talk to her, but the second housekeeper gave me a pile of rags and some scented oil, and set me to work on the yards of rich wood paneling in the sitting room and dining room.

As I wiped and polished, certain thoughts traced themselves over and over in my mind. The scented oil filled my nostrils, reminding me of my mother's potions. I remembered her sorting out bundles of herbs on the wooden table in our hut, her frown deepening in the firelight. She had loved my father, whom I had never met. For years I had secretly believed that the purpose of her herbs, her potions, and her utterances was not to help others but to keep me near her. But now it seemed that even my flight from her fit into some incomprehensible design. I began to see that Lao Fu was right. I was young; the world was a mystery.

I finished the woodwork and walked into the hall. And for the first time I noticed something odd about the Wens' house. I saw the great house, with its women and servants, as testimony to the unquenchable desire of its master, desire that destroyed all obstacles and then discarded them. The house seemed raw and unexplained, as if it were hiding its origin. The rooms were big and empty: too clean, too new, too cold. I looked down the hall at the dozen servants cleaning and sweeping as if



there were more than dirt to get rid of.

As I entered the dining room, one of the rags dropped out of my hands and fell to the wooden floor with a small thud. I knelt down to pick it up, but then I stopped, crouching, and stared at the rough blue cotton fabric.

Snatching the rag, I sprang up and ran toward the staircase. I had to find Meisi, my friend, and tell her what had happened. I needed to hear what she would say. I had to see her. I pounded up the stairs, past the second floor, and up to the family quarters.

The upstairs was lit by the fading light from a few windows. I had never been up so high before, but I remembered the stories from the servants' table: the four wives each in a suite of rooms, and at one end the master's room, near a separate staircase to the outside door, so that he could get away. The doors were closed. Sweet scents of soap and perfume filled the air. They must all be getting ready for dinner. I would never find Meisi.

I heard a doorknob turn, and then another door open and shut. I

saw two doors at the north end, and one was ajar. I hurried toward it and ran straight into Meisi coming out. When I saw her face, I forgot to think for a moment.

"What's wrong?" I cried.

Meisi buried her face in her hands. "Oh!" she sobbed. "It's terrible—I have to get away from here! I can't work here anymore."

"What happened?" I said. She clutched herself around the waist and ran down the hall. I followed her down the two flights of stairs, rushing past a few surprised-looking servants. "Meisi," I begged, "let me help you!"

She ran into the room we shared with some other servants.

"Please let me help you," I said. "You're always so kind to me."

"Do you have a clean shirt?" she whimpered, her arms still crossed. "Mine are in the wash."

"It'll be too big," I said. But I handed her one. She reached for it, and I saw the huge rip in the one that she had on. She took off her torn shirt. I saw four blue bruises, in the shape of fingerprints, on her arm. More bruises and scratches were on her chest.

Then I knew what I had to do. I found a pair of scissors and cut the stone from the rag I still held in my hand. I went back up the stairs, past the second floor and the library, up to the third floor. The door to the master's room was still ajar. The shades were closed, but I made out a huge square shape in the semi-darkness. I walked to the great canopied bed, and I hid the stone inside it.

When I came back downstairs, Meisi and her things were gone.

LATE THAT NIGHT I WAS ASKED TO WORK IN THE library. My eyes smarting with weariness, I searched the tall bookcases in the flickering light from the fireplace.

"You're making a mistake," I heard him say. "They won't harm you or your business. You'd be better off staying in China and keeping what you have. There's no telling what will happen if you run off and leave everything."

The men by the fire said nothing.

"They would never touch you," he said.

After a minute one of the foreigners spoke. "What will happen to you, Wen? Where are you burying your money? How much of it have you sent abroad?"

"I told you," Wen said confidently. "How could they betray one of their own kind? They won't get me."

Finally I found the book he wanted, and he dismissed me for the evening. The room was utterly silent as I left.

I went downstairs, put on my nightclothes, and lay in bed.

When I shut my eyes, I found that I had grown as light as a straw. I floated high on the wind over the Wens' great house and back to where I had come from. I soared over the rich green Yangtze Delta, with its fishermen and rice paddies, following the broad river as it narrowed into rushing rapids, and then continuing westward toward the mountains of my village. Evening fell; the stars wheeled over my head. When I landed, the air smelled of thawed earth and sweet plum blossoms. I walked quietly down the dark road, past the well, and to the corner where my mother's hut stood, slightly sagging.

I looked through the window. Her face was deeply

grooved, bloodless with concentration. She had unbraided her long gray hair. She sat cross-legged in the firelight in front of a group of small paper figures. Her voice rattled into the air, making an incantation. She swayed, muttering low deep sounds under her breath, an endless curse word. I looked at the firepot; coals glowed through the slits in its iron sides. I watched through the window until my vision faded into smoke.

Sometime after midnight I was awakened by the sound of gunfire. It was May 12, and the Communist army had reached the outskirts of Shanghai.

CONSIDERING THE EVENTS THAT HAVE SINCE taken place in China and the world, my own story is small and not very interesting. But it is mine. Like ginseng roots, our buried pasts have different shapes. I never saw my mother again. After Lao Fu rescued me from the Wens' house, I fled to Taiwan. A year later I met up with a man from our village who told me what had happened there: the Communists had reached the village a few months after the fall of Shanghai, and they had executed my mother as a witch.

In Taiwan, I worked at a library. Now I shelve books in the Chinese collection at an American university. I have a husband and two children who both attended college. We own our small house. I don't keep the house too clean, and I tried not to frighten my daughters the way my mother frightened me. But there are things I can't forget, and things my family knows they should never do. They do not light fires in the fireplace, not even if I won't be home for hours. Because the smell of smoke, the faintest trace, reminds me of my mother.

I see her brooding over her past and I remember that it's not wise to look back too long and deep at what has gone. It is not wise to think of Shanghai, the broad houses now shabby and sectioned off for twenty families. Or to dwell too long on my friend Meisi and her kindness. Or to remember the fire that the Communists started when they reached our section of the city.

The flames leaped through the house, feeding themselves along the expensive wood paneling, ruffling the curtains, exploding the leaded-glass windows. I stood outside with the other servants and watched the sparks and ashes fly up into the night. We looked on as four soldiers led our master out onto the lawn. The soldiers wore red stars on their caps. They struck the back of his knees to make him kneel to them. He knelt with his head held high and with anger burning in his face. One of them raised a long machete, twirling the knife so that the blunt side came down on the back of his neck to make him fall forward. For a moment we were silent; only flames moved. Then the soldier raised his arm again, and the sharp blade sliced all our lives in two. □

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MOVING THE FRAME

Impudent spring has come
since your chest rose and fell
for the last time, bringing
the push and ooze of budding peonies,
with ants crawling over them
exuberantly.

I have framed the picture
from your obituary. It must have been
taken on a hot graduation day:
You're wearing your academic robes
—how splendid they were—
and your hair and beard are curly
with sweat. The tassel sways . . .
No matter how I move your face
around my desk,
your eyes don't meet my eyes.

There was one hard night
while your breath became shallower
and shallower, and then
you were gone from us. A person
simply vanishes! I came home
and fell deeply asleep for a long
time, but I woke up again.

—Jane Kenyon

WIND

We know it by feel,
by the tears it brings to our eyes.
We taste brine and coal stacks, the chrome on its wings.
In our mouths its yellow tassels, its sulfur, its spongy bolls
of cotton mix.
We smell its great anarchic rig barreling to market with
oxides and acids, bent backs, pollen and raindrops.
Touched, the white petals of the trillium nod.
It comes away with a mole's breath, possum turd, the fox's
potent urine.
From us it takes a hair, a shout, a seed of sweat.
It lifts each exhalation and alcoholic vapor, every urge to
disperse, to leave the earth, each
speck of saliva, sawdust, turpentine, and bears it away.
Its intentions are transparent, its reasoning circular,
abrasive, encompassing.
With half an ear we listen to it declaim from boat masts and
telephone lines, fulminate through the trees, applaud
from grass and wheat.
But when it speaks for itself, uttering those deep animal sounds
of collision, of resistance, of release,
we stop what we're doing and hear inside us as inside a
ventriloquist's dummy
odd mouthings, inspired words of feel.

—David Weiss

WILD PEAVINES

I have never understood how
the mountains when first seen by hunters
and traders and settlers were covered
with peavines. How could every cove
and clearing, old field, every
opening in the woods and even
understories of deep woods
be laced with vines and blossoms in
June? They say the flowers were so thick
the fumes were smothering. They tell
of shining fogs of bees above
the sprawling mess and every bush
and sapling tangled with tender
curls and tresses. I don't see how
it was possible for wild peas
to take the woods in shade and deep
hollows and spread over cliffs in
hanging gardens and choke out other
flowers. It's hard to believe the creek
banks and high ledges were that bright.
But hardest of all is to see
how such profusion, such overwhelming
lushness and lavish could vanish,
so completely disappear that
you must look through several valleys
to find a sprig or strand of wild
peavine curling on a weedstalk
like some word from a lost language
once flourishing on every tongue.

—Robert Morgan

EMPTINESS

Emptiness cannot be
compressed. Nor can it
fight abuse. Nor is there
an endless West hosting
elk, antelope, and the
tough cayuse. This is
true also of the mind:
it can get used.

—Kay Ryan

SOMETIMES

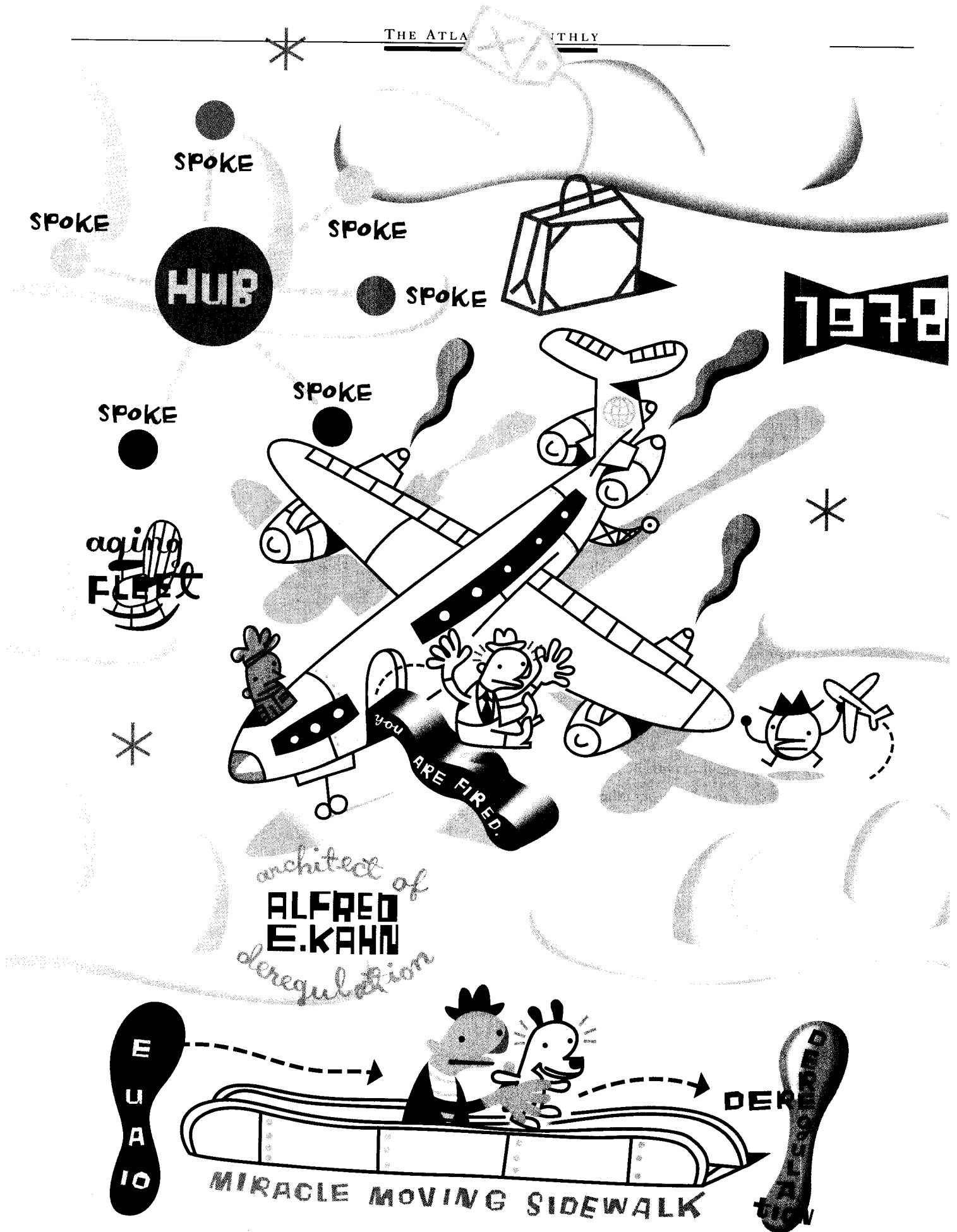
from the periphery
of the family
where I sit watching
my children and
my children's children
in all their bright
cacophony,

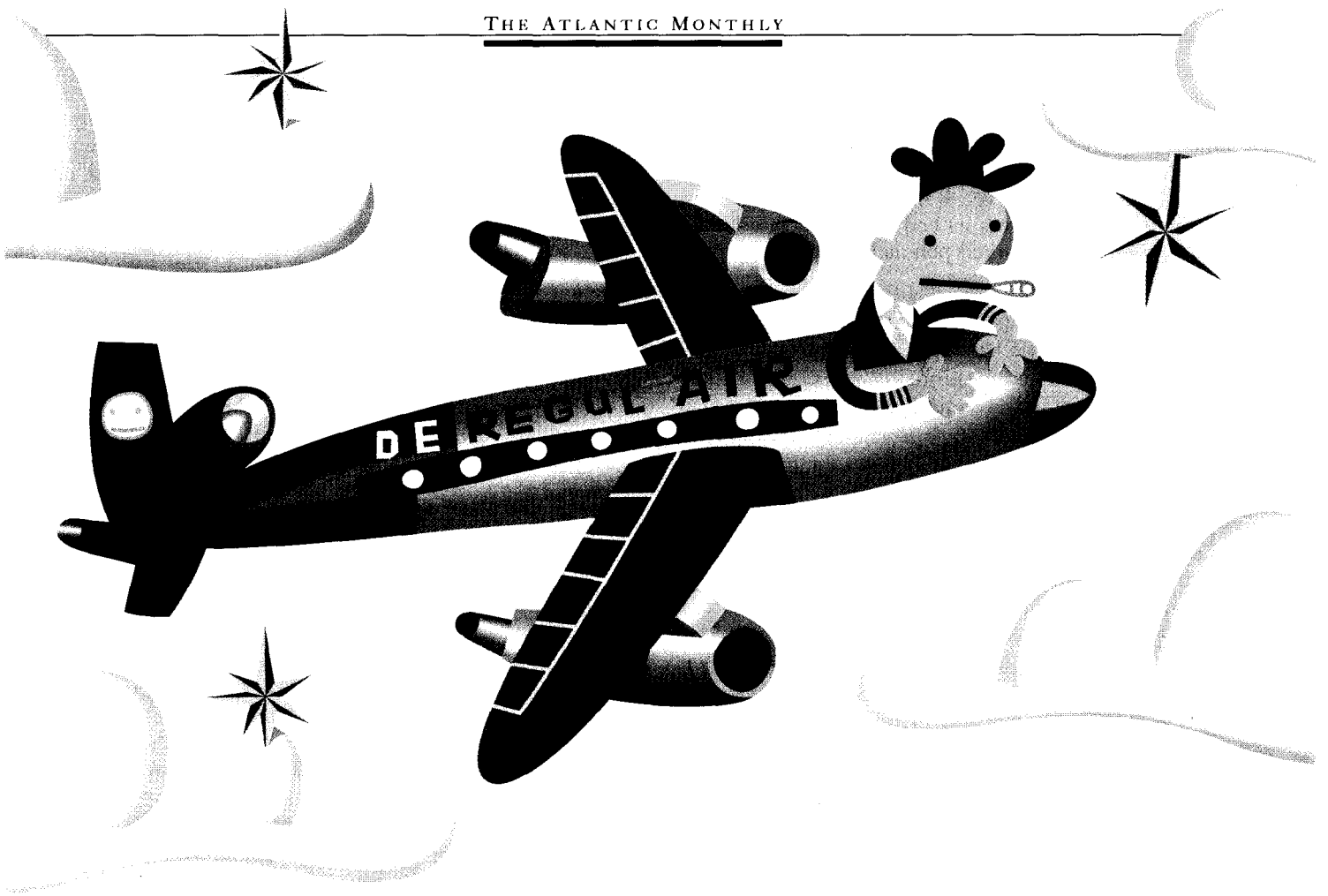
I seem to leave
my body—
plump effigy
of a woman, upright

on a chair—
and as I float
willingly away

toward the chill
silence of my own future,
their voices break
into the syllables
of strangers, to whom
with this real hand
I wave good-bye.

—Linda Pastan





The widely accepted view that airline deregulation has been a disaster both for consumers and for the airline industry is, the author argues, a distortion of the truth

WHAT WENT RIGHT

BY PAUL SHEEHAN

THERE IS SOMETHING STRANGE ABOUT THE AIRLINE BUSINESS. IT HAS BECOME a hard industrial enterprise, yet retains enough romance to inspire delusion and fever on a grand scale. The delusion and fever have been especially apparent since the industry was deregulated, fifteen years ago.

"Everyone in the airline industry went hog-wild in 1978, and there's still wildness out there," says Clifford Winston, a transportation scholar at the Brookings Institution, in Washington, D.C. The stampede—this century's closest equivalent to the Oklahoma land runs of the 1890s—shocked the architect of deregulation, Alfred E. Kahn, who was then one of President Jimmy Carter's key economic advisers and the chairman of the Civil Aviation Board. Looking back at what happened, Kahn wrote,

During the period of rapid deregulation, I scoffed at what seemed to be a general belief among defenders of the [existing] regulatory regime that there is something about the airlines that drives businessmen crazy—that once the CAB removes its body from the threshold, they will rush into markets pell-mell, en masse. . . .

I was wrong. . . .

Kahn's words appeared in *The American Economic Review* in 1988, and little has happened since to change his belief that the airlines are spiritually different from other enterprises. "People went into the business without any regard to the size and strength of their competition," he told me recently, "or how many sellers the market could sustain, or how much capital they would need. There was a fever."

The fever has extended to the news media, which have fixated on the ills of the airline industry—a part of a larger process that has reduced the vast complexities of the 1980s to a rubble of clichés. In fact, the ascendancy of intellectual packaging has condensed the 1980s into a single all-powerful epithet—the Decade of Greed—and any deviation from this orthodoxy, such as charting the overall success of airline deregulation, is either ignored or contradicted.

The U.S. airline industry has endured a period of historic upheaval. Like much history, it has not been pretty. In 1978 the United States had twenty large airlines. Today the names of many of those companies read like a roll call of the dead: Pan American, Eastern, Western, Braniff, National, Frontier, Allegheny, Hughes Air-

west, North Central, Ozark, Piedmont, Southern, and Texas International. As these airlines died or were taken over, another dozen companies were born, but they, too, have nearly all gone. Of the nine large survivors, TWA and America West are operating under bankruptcy protection, Continental has just emerged from bankruptcy for the second time since deregulation, and Northwest is in extreme structural distress.

This hemorrhaging of red ink and job security, the liquidation of tradition and regional flavor, and the concentration of power in three behemoths—American, Delta, and United—has resulted in increasingly querulous criticism, encapsulated by one of the most successful books of recent years, *America: What Went Wrong?* (1992), written by two Pulitzer Prize-winning journalists from the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Donald Barlett and James Steele. The book has sold more than 500,000 copies. It remained on the *New York Times* paperback best-seller list for more than seven months. *America: What Went Wrong?* is clearly a book that speaks to its time—a time of fundamental business restructuring, when millions of Americans are genuinely worried about losing their jobs,

and millions are fearful of an erosion of the social fabric.

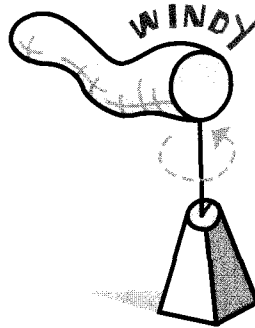
Barlett and Steele's thesis was that corporate deal-makers were able to enrich themselves at the expense of the American people during twelve years of Republican Administrations in Washington. In detailing what the authors saw as a pillaging of the economy, which they described as "the dismantling of the middle class," they cited many examples of government-tolerated greed, and portrayed the deregulation of the airline business as an egregious example of misguided policy.

Today, there is less competition in the airline industry than before deregulation. In 1978 the ten largest airlines accounted for 88 percent of the revenue passenger miles flown by United States carriers. By 1990 the ten had increased their share of the miles flown to 94 percent. In many markets, there is virtually no competition, and prices reflect it. In 1977 it cost \$86 to fly from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh, round trip; in 1983 the cost had gone up to \$124. By 1992 it cost \$460. . . .

In summary, under airline deregulation, fares have gone up, not down. Competition became destructive, not productive. Service was cut back. The increase in air travelers was lower in the decade after deregulation than in the decade before it. Cities once served by multiple carriers are now served by one or none. And the airline industry is in shambles. . . .

Indeed, most United States carriers have been left so weakened by the airline industry's increasingly grave financial condition that they have been unable to invest in new aircraft to replenish their aging jet fleets. As a result, United States airlines are flying jets that are considerably older than the planes of major European competitors, which are clamoring for permission to enter the United States domestic market and compete with American carriers.

There is ample evidence that the arguments found in *America: What Went Wrong?* have so hardened into conventional wisdom that President Bill Clinton felt it necessary to set up a National Commission to Ensure a Strong Competitive Airline Industry. The creation of this bipartisan commission illustrates how widespread are doubts about the wisdom of deregulating the airline industry. These doubts have been fanned by a media culture that cleaves almost pathologically to discord. The endless bad news about the airlines reflected the trauma that would inevitably occur when a highly regulated industry was suddenly dragged into an open marketplace. But the media have also largely ignored the underlying achievements that were the whole point of deregulation. As a result, the coverage of airline deregulation has grossly distorted the results of one of the boldest economic experiments of the century.



FORTUNATELY FOR THE CAUSE OF ACCURACY, THE airline industry is an unusually transparent one. "The transportation sector is endowed with a unique and largely public data base," wrote Professor Robert Gordon, a leading transportation scholar and the chairman of the department of economics at Northwestern University, in a major 1992 study. Economists, he wrote, have in fact put in a disproportionate amount of effort studying the transportation sector, "because of its long history of government regulation and, more recently, the laboratory experiment provided by the virtually complete deregulation of domestic air transport. . . ."

When the analysis contained in *America: What Went Wrong?* is held against the light of this abundant scholarly research and government data, journalism suffers as a result. Barlett and Steele wrote,

"In summary, under airline deregulation, fares have gone up, not down."

The truth is that fares have gone down, significantly. Today the *average* airfare is a third less than it was at the time of deregulation. According to figures compiled by the Air Transport Association and the Department of Transportation, from 1977 to 1992 the average yield, or price charged per passenger mile by airlines, declined 35 percent after adjusting for inflation. In constant-dollar terms, airfares have declined in ten of the past eleven years.

One of the ugly and self-evident truths of airline deregulation is that travelers who have to fly on short notice, mostly business flyers, have generally been treated rapaciously by the airlines. But more than 70 percent of the market has paid much lower fares since deregulation. Even full-fare travelers have been compensated, with frequent-flyer programs and a greater frequency of flights—both direct by-products of deregulation.

"Competition became destructive, not productive."

According to a new book-length study, *The Evolution of the Airline Industry*, to be published by the Brookings Institution this year, the U.S. airline industry has since 1978 become by far the most efficient and competitive in the world, with a huge pricing advantage over foreign airlines. The study, by Steven Morrison, a professor of economics at Northeastern University, and Clifford Winston, found that in 1969 the average yield of U.S. carriers was slightly lower—4.8 percent—than that of non-U.S. carriers. By 1990, the authors calculated, the lower-fare advantage of U.S. carriers over foreign carriers had grown to 23 percent, a decisive edge in a competitive marketplace.

Robert Gordon has measured significant gains in airline productivity since deregulation, and a 1992 study by the McKinsey Global Institute concluded, "The 28 percentage point labor productivity difference (U.S. = 100 percent) between the U.S. airline industry and the European industry

is largely a function of the less regulated, more competitive U.S. market environment."

"Service was cut back."

Service has increased, substantially. The domestic airline industry is now more than twice as large as it was in 1977, while the population has grown by only 15 percent. Despite the demise of Pan Am and the decline of TWA, international service by U.S. carriers has almost trebled. And the most

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enduring popular idea about deregulation—that nonstop flights have largely given way to indirect routings through hubs—is a myth, but one that, according to Gordon, "appears to be universally held by journalists." His 1992 study, "Productivity in the Transportation Sector," conducted for the National Bureau of Economic Research, found that "the establishment of new hubs has greatly increased the number of nonstop routings available, and remarkably few nonstop routes have been discontinued."

The study examined the 500 biggest markets in the United States and found that only seventeen (or 3.4 percent) had lost nonstop service. "Many of the abandoned flights to small cities were along linear routes dictated by regulation," Gordon wrote. "Because most of these routes were shorter than 200 miles in length, they were valued by relatively few passengers, most of whom used surface transport. . . . Critics overlook the fact that *millions of people actually live in metropolitan areas where new hubs were established.*" There are currently forty-one hub-and-spoke operations in thirty-two cities, which means that at least thirty large population centers now have significantly greater nonstop service than they did ten years ago. Gordon suggested that even though travelers complained about hubs, much hub traffic was voluntary, influenced in large part by loyalty to frequent-flyer programs.

What's more, the study found that many markets have seen a dramatic increase in service. Boston, for example, had a single daily nonstop flight to Dallas in 1978; it now

has ten. The study also found that outer urban areas, which are the fastest-growing segment of America, have been particularly well served by the evolution of hub-and-spoke systems, because they have allowed satellite airports to become a part of the national route system. Today thousands of travelers prefer the convenience of Newburgh-Stewart, White Plains, Islip, Ontario, and Orange County airports to the expense and inconvenience of driving into New York City or Los Angeles.

The industry is also entering a phase of competition in which low-cost small carriers, such as

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Reno Air, Kiwi International, Skybus, and Morris Air, are creating niches in the marketplace, while Southwest is rapidly building a national system that serves as a cheap alternative to the hub system.

"The increase in air travelers was lower in the decade after deregulation than in the decade before it."

Wrong. In the ten years before airline deregulation, 1968–1977, revenue passenger miles by U.S. carriers rose by 96 percent. In the ten years after airfare deregulation, 1978–1987, traffic rose by 109 percent, according to figures compiled by the Air Transport Association.

This post-deregulation growth surge took place even though air travel was a rapidly maturing industry whose rate of growth had been decreasing for decades. In the 1960s, for instance, passenger miles increased by more than 220 percent as the industry was transformed by the introduction of big jets.

"Cities once served by multiple carriers are now served by one or none."

Multiple service has increased significantly since deregulation. Steven Morrison and Clifford Winston counted the number of equal-sized competitors on every domestic airline route and found that since 1978 the average had increased from 1.5 per route to 1.85. "Today," they wrote,

"only 3 percent of passengers fly on routes served by only one airline, down from 9 percent in 1978." This did not prevent Barlett and Steele from using Philadelphia–Pittsburgh—one of only a handful of monopoly routes between major cities in the entire country—as their "example" of what has happened to competition since deregulation.

America: What Went Wrong? also portrayed the shrinking number of carriers as an intrinsically evil development, when in fact market competitiveness has actually increased, because the number of *national* carriers has expanded, from five to seven. To give a random and typical example of the effect of this growth in national franchising, in 1977 travelers between Sacramento and Oklahoma City had a handful of poorly connected choices. Today these two secondary cities are linked by seventeen direct flights a day, via the western hubs of five different carriers.

Barlett and Steele found no place in their analysis for the most subversive and dynamic force in the industry, Southwest Airlines, which has trounced the megacarriers every time it has competed head to head with them and is transforming itself into a national carrier. Southwest has become the Wal-Mart of the airlines, growing by more than 2,000 percent since 1978 and dominating each new market with bare-bones service at bare-bones prices. Its average ticket price is \$59.

Barlett and Steele also inexplicably ignored the extraordinary gains made in international service. In 1978 two U.S. carriers dominated intercontinental travel, most of which was funneled through either New York or San Francisco. Today nonstop service to Europe is provided from twenty-two cities by the seven national U.S. carriers, and nonstop service to Asia is provided from thirteen cities.

"And the airline industry is in shambles."

Morrison and Winston, after an exhaustive review of industry data, reached exactly the opposite conclusion, showing net improvements in service quality, safety, and fares: "On balance, the industry is performing much better today than it would if it were still regulated." Robert Gordon's research reached a similar conclusion. And the McKinsey comparative study found that while U.S. airlines had only 26 percent more staff than Western Europe's airlines in 1989, they flew 61 percent more passenger miles and carried almost twice as many passengers. Not surprisingly, given this disparity, European carriers charged their customers some 50 percent more than U.S. carriers charged for comparable flights.

A 1992 study by the Center for the Study of American Business, at Washington University, found not only that airline travel has become cheaper and safer and the industry much more productive in the United States than in the rest of the world, but also that objective measures of ser-

vice, such as passengers' complaints and involuntary "bumping" from flights, are all much improved since the regulated era.

The industry has also enjoyed an employment boom. Total employment in the airline industry is 75 percent higher since deregulation, and the average salary last year was \$52,000.

Wall Street, too, has found the industry to be far from a shambles. In the six months from November of 1992 to April of 1993, after the airlines instituted serious curbs on costs and growth, the market value of the five major carriers listed on the New York Exchange rose by close to \$3 billion—the financial equivalent of creating a megacARRIER as large as United—while the index of major airline stocks set new records.

"Indeed, most United States carriers have been left so weakened by the airline industry's increasingly grave financial condition that they have been unable to invest in new aircraft to replenish their aging jet fleets."

Pure fiction. From 1985 to 1990 U.S. airlines bought 1,300 jets, the largest order for new equipment in history, according to Morrison and Winston. The buying spree almost doubled the industry's capacity in just five years, creating an enormous structural surplus. It was actually overinvestment in equipment, not underinvestment or deregulation, that was the underlying structural cause of the industry's problems.

Barlett and Steele used TWA to, as they put it, "illustrate what has happened" to U.S. airline fleets. In doing so, they selected a bankrupt carrier with by far the oldest fleet among the major airlines, a dilapidated fleet that was singled out by American Airlines' president, Robert Crandall, in Senate testimony: "TWA chose to pursue an old-aircraft strategy, believing that financial commitments for new aircraft were foolish."

Barlett and Steele completely ignored the modern fleets of the three megacarriers, American, Delta, and United, which have invested billions in new planes. The 670 jets in American Airlines' fleet, for example, average just eight years of age. Southwest has the youngest domestic airline fleet in the world, averaging just six years old. None of this was of interest to Barlett and Steele.

"As a result, United States airlines are flying jets that are considerably older than the planes of major European competitors. . . ."

Apart from being untrue, this insinuates that deregulation has made commercial flying more dangerous. Figures compiled by the National Transportation Safety Board, comparing the period 1955–1977 with the period since

deregulation, show that the average annual number of people killed in accidents involving major domestic airlines has declined by 27.5 percent. Even larger declines were recorded in the average number of accidents per year, down by 53.5 percent, and of accidents involving fatalities, down by 39.7 percent.

As for the comparison with Europe, a new book on airline safety, *Why Airplanes Crash*, by the aviation scholars Clinton Oster, John Strong, and C. Kurt Zorn, found that travel in Western Europe on Western European airlines is 30 percent more dangerous than domestic travel on North American airlines. All the predictions that deregulation's Cassandras have made about cost-cutting, shoddy maintenance, and decreased safety have been discredited—so much so that some scholars are urging further deregulation of the system. "Scholarly research [indicates] that the safety record for air travel by major carriers has improved substantially since airline deregulation," wrote Professor Richard McKenzie, of the University of California at Irvine, in the libertarian journal *Regulation* in 1991. "A case can be made for the deregulation of the rest of the air transport system, specifically airports and the air traffic control system."



"... major European competitors . . . are clamoring for permission to enter the United States domestic market and compete with American carriers."

Fantasy. No European carrier is clamoring for permission to compete in the U.S. domestic market. Several European carriers, notably British Airways and KLM, have entered the U.S. domestic market by buying large stakes in American carriers.

The Europeans are not interested in unfettered competition. Far from demanding an open-skies agreement with the United States, a reform supported by the U.S. government and the major U.S. airlines, the governments of France, Britain, Spain, Germany, Italy, and Ireland have all sought during the past three years to curb the access of U.S. carriers to their markets. France, troubled by a precipitous decline in trans-Atlantic market share for Air France, suspended its bilateral agreement with the United States last year.

During the past seven years, as strong American carriers replaced weak ones on international routes, the United States has enjoyed a historic surge in its share of the international market at the expense of foreign rivals, with market share jumping from 47.4 percent to 53 percent.

The European carriers vaunted by Barlett and Steele are mostly government-backed monopolies with operating costs twice as high as those of U.S. carriers, and they charge their captive markets airfares commensurate with those higher costs. A 1992 study by Paul Karos and

Gretha Honsvald, airline analysts for First Boston, found that even the most advanced European airlines have fallen far behind major U.S. carriers in operating costs. Lufthansa and Swissair, those paragons of German and Swiss efficiency, had costs in 1991 that were almost two and a half times as high per available seat-mile as those of American, Delta, and United.

DURING THE DECADE 1975–1985 AMERICA'S INTERNATIONAL flag-carriers frittered away their world leadership in international markets. The deregulated era has seen the death of Pan Am and Eastern, and the eclipse of TWA, and meanwhile the emergence of hyper-competitive U.S. global players with unmatched market power, which they have achieved through a combination of high productivity, giant hub-and-spoke domestic systems, and consumer loyalty to frequent-flyer programs.

These programs, begun by American Airlines in 1981, have been a spectacularly successful marketing innovation copied throughout the world. According to *Frequent Flyer* magazine, more than six million free tickets were awarded to frequent-flyer-program members in 1991. "This is one of the best things that has ever happened to the airline business," says Joe Branca-

source of material for Barlett and Steele, is not highly esteemed in the scholarly community. "We've been trying to engage Mr. Dempsey in a public debate for some time but haven't yet succeeded," says Clinton Oster, who is a professor of public and environmental affairs at the University of Indiana. Many of Dempsey's claims were specifically examined in Robert Gordon's 1991 survey, and Gordon found some of them to be "fanciful" and "trivial."

"There has been some ineffably dishonest scholarship about deregulation," Alfred Kahn says. "I think of myself as a liberal Democrat, and I can't bear to be in the company of these people. They want to go back to the world of cartelization. But I don't think they can prevail. There are now powerful vested interests in deregulation that, having achieved freedom from regulation, will not readily surrender it."

These powerful interests must still, however, contend with one of the unhappiest coincidences in U.S. political history: the liberalizing of the bankruptcy laws in 1978, the same year the airlines were opened to unfettered competition. The reforms of the bankruptcy code, which were intended to help sound companies withstand temporary insolvency, have meant instead that many unsound companies have been kept alive by a legal respirator.

The airline industry thus continues to operate in an artificially surfeited market, in which well-managed companies are weakened in favor of the poorly managed. It is an unnatural order, bearing the fingerprints of politicians, and when combined with the airlines' undisciplined growth and their self-destructive bidding war to attract travel-agency business (agency commissions ballooned from 4.2 percent of airline cash operating expenses in 1978 to 11.5 in 1992), it has made the airline-deregulation revolution far more arduous than it needed to be.

Most people appear to have forgotten that deregulation was a revolution the airlines did not want. The airline companies, long protected by Congress, knew that freedom would be hard. All of them except United, which was then the domestic giant, vigorously lobbied Congress against deregulation, and lost.

Fifteen years ago, when politicians, economists, airline executives, consumer advocates, and journalists projected into a deregulated future, almost all of them foresaw a forest of proliferating carriers and market niches. They got it wrong—just as two authentic visionaries, Arthur C. Clarke and Stanley Kubrick, did when, in their seminal 1968 movie *2001: A Space Odyssey*, they depicted a gleaming white spaceliner shuttling from Earth to the moon, and gave it the colors of Pan Am. □

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telli, the magazine's executive editor. "The airlines are giving away millions of seats they couldn't have sold."

Like all other positive developments in the airline industry, the thriving frequent-flyer economy found no place in *America: What Went Wrong?* The only scholar quoted by Barlett and Steele is Paul Dempsey, a law professor at the University of Denver and the author of *Flying Blind* (1990) and *Airline Deregulation and Laissez Faire Mythology* (1992), sustained polemics against deregulation. Dempsey's work, which appears to have been the major

GOD AND THE INTELLECTUALS

Among the well-educated the myth still circulates that religion is the preserve of the dim-witted, unlettered, and irrational, that the price of salvation is checking your mind at the Pearly Gates. Yet, from Harvard to Berkeley, and among inquisitive people generally, there's an undeniable renewal of interest in the questions traditional religion raises and seeks to answer. This fascination is largely the result of the failure of secular substitutes for religion (such as positivism, rationalism, hedonism, consumerism, technological utopianism, Freudianism, and Marxism) to give abidingly satisfying answers to the truly significant puzzles in life: evil, goodness, suffering, love, death, and the meaning of it all.

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Live From Bayreuth

Legendary Wagner performances are now available for home consumption

by Matthew Gurewitsch

THE TERM *musique concrète* was not coined for records, but these days it seems as if it should have been. Shoppers descend on stores the way Napoleon did on Egypt, coming home with civilization by the crate. Every note of Mozart, the complete cantatas of Bach, all in stock.

And now we have all the Wagner the composer wished the world to remember: the accursed Flying Dutchman on his Sisyphean voyage to salvation; the troubadour Tannhäuser seesawing between sin and sanctity; Lohengrin, the white knight whose name must remain secret; Tristan and Isolde, who find mystic love at the portals of death; the crafty god Wotan and his heroic progeny battling the forces of darkness through the four-evening cycle *Der*

Ring des Nibelungen; and the rest, all the way through Parsifal, the holy fool, whose sufferings restore the powers of the Holy Grail itself. These mesmerizing reflections of the conflicts in the human soul are brought to us by Philips Classics live from the festival that Wagner founded in the theater he built to his own specifications for his exclusive use. The package was made to order for our acquisitive age, particularly since ticket orders for the Bayreuth festival (this year July 25 to August 28) outstrip capacity by a factor of five. Both audio and video versions are available, in some cases deriving from the same performance, in others not. Each opera is available separately.

Does the Bayreuth label matter? A lot. From its first season, in the summer

of 1876, which consisted of the world's first three performances of the complete *Ring*, Bayreuth has set the official tone for Wagnerian production everywhere. (No matter that the master himself deplored the clumsiness of much of what he saw there.) The second Wagner festival, six years later, saw the world premiere of *Parsifal*, composed especially for the house and intended by Wagner never to be performed anywhere else. It remained for his widow, the redoubtable Cosima, to carry out his wish that subsequent Bayreuth summers also present model productions of the other works of the composer's maturity.

Constructed from the cheapest materials, the Festspielhaus amounted in Wagner's eyes to no more than the

"sketch of an ideal." Still, it did embody revolutionary structural essentials, in particular the fan-shaped auditorium, inspired by the amphitheaters of the ancients, and an innovative concealed orchestra pit, or "mystic chasm." Against the custom of the age, the house was kept dark during performances. Nothing—not the glitter of bejeweled beauties in their boxes, not the captivating histrionics of the conductor—was to distract the spectator from the action on the stage. Wagner had hoped that the German nation would eventually replace his wood, brick, and canvas makeshift with a grander monument. Instead the Festspielhaus itself has become that monument, as much for its mystique as for its singular, superb acoustics.

For seven decades Bayreuth's example was frankly reactionary. Under Wagner's executors—first Cosima, then their son, Siegfried, and then Siegfried's notorious British-born widow, Winifred, hostess to the Führer—productions clung to the twiggly storybook realism of the mid-nineteenth century. Innovators like Adolphe Appia, who knocked at the door with highly abstract concepts shaped by pure light and gesture, found no favor at the shrine and precious little elsewhere.

Antiquarianism had at mid-century become a political impossibility. In 1951, when Siegfried and Winifred's sons, Wieland and Wolfgang (neither tainted by the sins of their unrepentant mother), raised the festival from the ashes, they stripped away all Teutonic reminiscences like so much Nazi bunting. Wieland's abstract, psychologically penetrating productions led the way, not without howls of protest from the old believers. Since Wieland's death, in 1966, Patrice Chéreau, Jean-Pierre Ponnelle, Harry Kupfer, Werner Herzog, Dieter Dorn, and others have continued to sow schism, and thereby to honor the essentially anti-authoritarian spirit of Wagner's creations. In the process they have been setting examples imitated throughout the world—and not only in productions of Wagner.

During the same period, however, as has been widely lamented, the art of singing has eroded to the point that key roles cannot be cast with authority, or even adequately, at Bayreuth or anywhere else. Discerning music lovers have no choice but to time-shift, courtesy of historic recordings, to the days

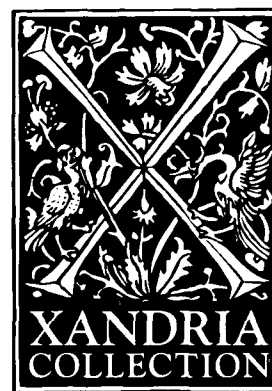
of Lauritz Melchior, Kirsten Flagstad, Friedrich Schorr, and Alexander Kipnis.

What have the festival's progressive productions accomplished? How well justified are the complaints on purely musical grounds? What does Wagner's work have to tell us, and by what means does it speak? The Bayreuth audios and videos of Philips's Richard Wagner Edition illuminate these questions.

THE AUDIO version of *Tristan und Isolde*, recorded in 1966, well before most of the other material, reaches back to the twilight of the century's Wagnerian golden age. Birgit Nilsson and Wolfgang Windgassen portray the adulterous lovers. Christa Ludwig sings Brangäne, who pours them a love potion when Isolde has distinctly asked for deadly poison, and Martti Talvela appears as King Marke, who in consequence is betrayed by the two people he loves best.

Windgassen and Talvela are dead; Nilsson is long retired; Ludwig is on the road for a long farewell tour. They were accounted giants in their prime, and so they are remembered. The most one can say for Windgassen now is that, aside from a few savage moments of anguish, he was reliable. Poetry and romantic allure were not in his compass; his voice simply did not have the colors. But Nilsson's garland is secure. With her first cry of outrage, she brings the Irish princess to life as the feral, wounded creature she is, brandishing her voice like a sword and pouring forth a lambent stream of sound in the *Liebestod*. Except for the long interlude of Marke's lament, shaped by Talvela with eloquent despair, it is Nilsson's Isolde who lets the listener experience this world from within.

In contrast, what governs the video, from 1983, is the imagination of Jean-Pierre Ponnelle, the designer and director. Some who saw the production at Bayreuth (as I did) like to remember Isolde on board ship to Cornwall in Act I, crowned with white flowers, her cape enveloping the quarterdeck. But what was that compared with the metallic tree whose branches overspread the whole stage in the second act, catching the glow of torches, transmitting light from the radiant night, now blossoming in the darkness, now withered in the flat gray of dawn? And who could forget the rocky islet of Act III, surrounded by a leaden sea, where Tristan expires



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beneath another tree, this one split and blasted as though by a thunderbolt at the dawn of time?

To my eyes, these tremendous theatrical conceptions look unimpressive on the home screen, but there are compensations, often in minute details. One comes in the third act, when after a great outburst Tristan falls unconscious and his trusty squire, Kurwenal, briefly laments the pass to which love has brought his master. In Ponnelle's staging the Shepherd is in attendance, though according to Wagner's stage directions he should be offstage. Kurwenal clutches him in his distress, but the Shepherd quietly pries himself loose with an expression on his face of pain, even distaste, too private to share. We see the two men moved not only by compassion for their master; the great cheat of existence shakes them to their bones. Witnesses suffer too—is that not the whole premise of drama? The point is surely true to Wagner.

No doubt the Richard Wagner Edition, in its handsomely emblazoned boxes, will attract purchasers in quest of the definitive. There is no such thing. But the two *Tristans* suggest two ways in which a performance may claim lasting value. The first is by authority, as exemplified by Nilsson's Isolde: the quality of imagining a work with such conviction and executing it with such power as to make it, while the performance lasts, one's own. The second is through grace, manifest in that passage of Kurwenal with the Shepherd: the ability to give a fleeting moment the radiance of epiphany. To be sure, one often accompanies the other, even if the two are in fact antithetical. Authority, rarely encountered as an absolute, is self-containment; it confronts us with truth we must recognize as external to ourselves. Grace, plentiful if we but open our eyes, shows the link between what we see and who we are.

THE PRODUCTION of the *Ring* presented in both the audio and video versions of the Richard Wagner Edition is the one generally identified by the name of its iconoclastic director, Patrice Chéreau. But the stamp set on this landmark creation by the conductor Pierre Boulez was at least as distinctive. Mounted in 1976 for the Wagner festival's hundredth anniversary, the Boulez-Chéreau *Ring* projected Wagner's Norse mythology onto the

landscape of the Industrial Revolution. Its unveiling generated ferocious controversy, which lent a certain irony to the fact that it was the first *Ring* ever filmed. Its first global telecast, in 1983, won Wagner converts by the millions.

The soundtrack reveals what the video obscures—the authority, in the sense just defined, in the orchestra's fineness of detail, its majestic articulation of large structures, and the incomparable transparency of its texture. Had this *Ring's* principals been capable of rising to authority by song alone, they assuredly could have done so with Boulez. On compact disc, though, Donald McIntyre's flawed vocalism occasionally detracts from the freshness of his delivery. Seen as well as heard, his authority is complete, and his Wotan—a god sharp and roguish yet capable of profound introspection—attains an enthralling wholeness. As Wotan's daughter, the Valkyrie Brünnhilde, who disobeys the battle command Wotan gives her against the promptings of his own heart, Gwyneth Jones chills the blood with her stentorian soprano. Here pictures do not help. With eyebrows permanently raised, she presents to the world a face as composed into abstraction as a Chinese mask. It is one measure of the production's success that she does not capsize it.

Its iconoclastic postmodern veneer notwithstanding, Chéreau's central conceit was not as new as some people thought. Most of his *Ring* translated Marxist thinking at least as old as George Bernard Shaw's *The Perfect Wagnerite* (1898) into theatrical pictures, many of them surprisingly playful: a hydroelectric dam, a steam-driven forge, a Victorian ruling-class wardrobe for the power brokers. Now that the production has become something of a classic, it appears that what gave the production life was not the shock value of the concept, which wore off long ago, but an abundant stream of grace, which is still there to see.

A single example, though a complex one, will have to do. It spans two evenings of the cycle. Snapshot No. 1: In the vast monologue at the center of the second part of the cycle, *Die Walküre*, Wotan searches his soul in the presence of his beloved daughter. Chéreau has Wotan place himself before a mirror, studying his face as he bares his thoughts. By the end of the evening their paths have parted forever, and he

bids her farewell in music unparalleled for its lofty tenderness.

Snapshot No. 2: We have reached *Siegfried*, part three of the cycle. Wotan and Alberich the dwarf, hereditary foes, meet before the cave of the sleeping dragon, who guards the fatal ring. The young hero who will slay the dragon is on the march. But who will win the ring? Nothing less than the fate of the world depends on who gets it next. Alberich, who forged it, lost it long ago to Wotan's force and cunning. Then Wotan let it go. Yet here he is again, calling himself the Wanderer, and Alberich rounds on him in a fury. Wotan disowns any designs on the treasure and decamps. For this scene Chéreau dresses the Wanderer and Alberich alike, their three-cornered hats marking them as relics of some picturesque past.

Even more, the likeness defines each as the other's reflection—recalling Wotan's monologue before the mirror and setting off profound resonances. Wotan and Alberich *are* each other's counterparts. As Wotan quits the field, leaving the enemy he will never see again, the trumpet sings after him a phrase quoted from his farewell to his daughter. The unsung words that go with the tune are "For the last time." So there is tenderness, too, in a struggle abandoned. No one but Wagner has woven psychology of such specificity and penetration into the fabric of music drama; here, one might suppose, the means are purely musical. Chéreau convinces me that truly to hear the music we also need the theater. For all the times I have heard the trumpet at the god's exit, it never had meaning for me until Chéreau made connections with *these* faces in *these* pictures.

WHAT IS the competition for the Philips albums? The audio market teems with options, live and from the recording studio, but there can never be clear-cut choices with works of such richness and difficulty. For a first *Ring* you will not go wrong with either the first commercial recording (now nearly thirty years old), under Georg Solti (London Records), or the latest, under Bernard Haitink (EMI Classics).

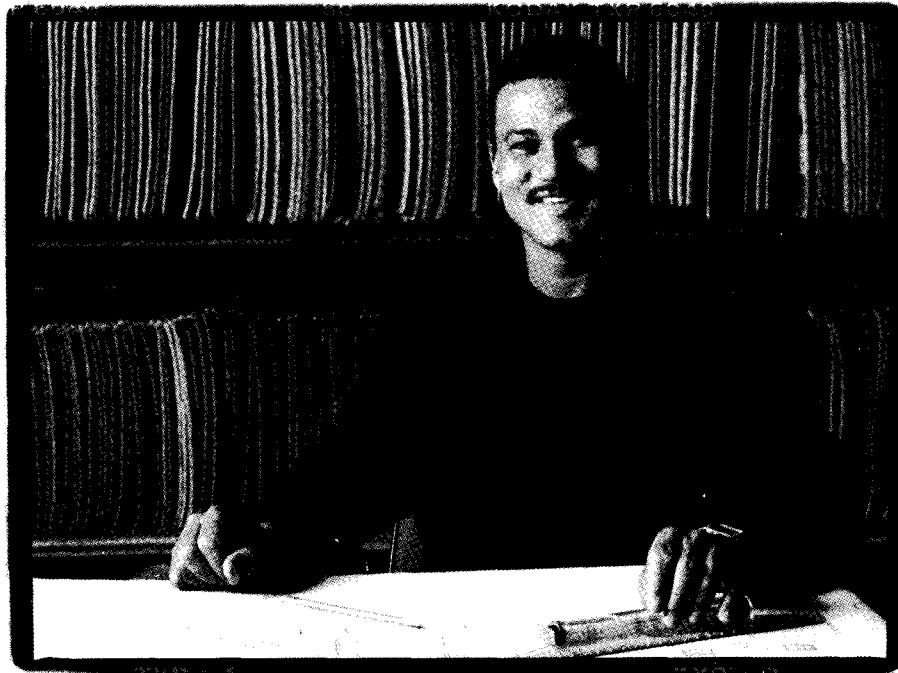
For video collectors the hardest choices involve the *Ring* and *Parsifal*. Harry Kupfer's recent "postnuclear" *Ring* from Bayreuth, under the baton of

"To Make It In America You Need To Speak My Language"

Daniel Barenboim, is on the horizon, from Teldec, but for now the available alternative to Boulez and Chéreau is the Metropolitan Opera's version (on Deutsche Grammophon), which sets out to render Wagner's stage directions down to the last leaf on the last tree. This, we are to believe, is the *Ring* Wagner would have staged if only he had had today's superior stage technology at his disposal. On the Met stage it all looks inexpressibly tacky, with the exception of the unforgettable moment when Alberich's dwarves, bearing nets full of gold to ransom him, rise through the ground like maggots from a cheese. (The formless dragon, which looks like a messy dish of prawns, is a disgrace.) All the same, as shot by the masterly Brian Large, the Met scenery makes a glowing backdrop for some magnificent performances: the ardent Brünnhilde of Hildegard Behrens, whose every gesture bears the stamp of truth; the ecstatic Sieglinde of Jessye Norman; Siegfried Jerusalem's appealing Siegfried, attractive in voice and bearing; the cruel, avid Hunding of Kurt Moll, a bass whose sable tones and air of command carry one back to an age of heroes.

Also well worth a look is the Herbert von Karajan version of *Das Rheingold*, the *Ring*'s first installment, peopled entirely by mermaids, dwarves, giants, and gods (no human beings). Filmed under Karajan's direction in 1978 to a soundtrack he had laid down four years before, this pilot features a first-rate ensemble, conducting as distinctive and splendid as that of Boulez, and images as traditional as the Met's—both unrealistic and telegenic (Deutsche Grammophon).

A Met *Parsifal*, starring Jerusalem, Waltraud Meier, and Moll, aired on the PBS series *Great Performances* in April, and no doubt will become available on video. It is worth waiting for. Hans Jürgen Syberberg has made a movie of the opera, previously released theatrically and now available on video from Kultur. Syberberg's imagination treads spooky paths. He presents Parsifal first as a curly-headed stripling and then as a dour, smooth-haired maiden, and the two are occasionally onscreen together. The visual welter is astonishing, a mad scholar's nightmare as perplexing as the opera itself. If you recognize the wooden horse made for a little boy Valkyrie to ride in the *Ring* of 1896, you should feel right at home. □



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On a Bike, Reluctantly

Discovering the many delights of touring the countryside under your own power

by Corby Kummer

IT HAD NEVER OCCURRED to me that I could enjoy a bicycle trip. I have seldom been on a bike since I was seventeen. I am jealously independent when I travel, as unwilling to wait for stragglers as I am to be on time for a prearranged schedule. Photographs in travel brochures of happy cyclists make me querulous: the cyclists seem to be smiling because they are naturally athletic, unlike me. Also, my unvarying uniform abroad is a blue blazer and gray flannels. I couldn't imagine ap-

pearing in a new town wearing a goofy helmet and indecently tight bicycle shorts.

Nonetheless, last year I was impressed by a young Canadian expatriate I met in Italy, Matthew Watkins, who had come to know the region we were in, Apulia, as a scout for a company specializing in bicycle trips. So well informed was he about the hidden grottoes, obscure museums, and places to find the best pasta and olive oil in the region that he persuaded me to consider a trip

with his former employer, Butterfield & Robinson. As one does on learning a new phrase, in the next months I heard frequent endorsements of Butterfield & Robinson. Several came from outdoors-resistant, even outdoors-phobic, people whose eyes unaccountably went out of focus when remembering their trip. This past spring I decided to join a B&R bicycle tour of southern Spain, between the Andalusian capitals of Cordoba and Seville.

The very idea of a luxury bicycling

trip was as unknown to me as the company. Sweating all day seemed incompatible with dinners at excellent restaurants and rooms at the best inns: didn't outdoor exercise mean roughing it? The idea did have a natural appeal, since I usually spend my touring days either walking through towns or riding through landscapes. This way I could do both and feel that I had earned the day's sixth or seventh dish of hazelnut *helado* (ice cream).

Still, I was full of trepidation when I arrived in Cordoba. Had my cyclist friends advised me well on what to bring? Would I know how to use more than three speeds on the intimidating multi-gear bike the firm supplies? Would I be able to keep up the pace the day's routes required? Perhaps most urgent, would saddle sores make every sunlit hour an ordeal?

So grumpy was I while dressing for the warm-up ride on the first day, trying to negotiate unfamiliar clothes in a field on an old Andalusian estate (we had been instructed to appear at our pickup point dressed to ride, but I was just off a plane), that Catherine Donnell, one of the two guides for our group, said evenly, "You know, this is supposed to be a vacation," and offered a lift to our first hotel. Testily I refused, and took a quick lesson in gear shifting from Donnell's colleague, Victoria Bake. The women later admitted that when I arrived, they were sure they had spotted real trouble, and wondered if they'd ever get me on a bike. For the next week their trouble was getting me off one.

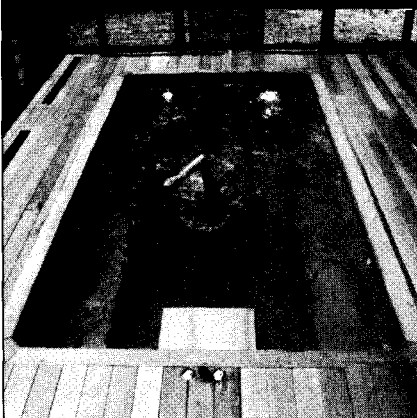
AFTER I returned home, I found myself daydreaming about the trip to a nearly alarming degree, my eyes going out of focus, because Donnell had been right: it *was* a vacation, offering the sense of abandon and possibility, along with the safety and the coddling, that one associates with an ocean liner. Instead of shipboard confinement there was the exhilaration of being outdoors, and the fragrances one often misses behind a windshield: pine, new grass, and, overpoweringly, orange blossoms. I had forgotten that exercise can be joyful and not just the best way to release the tensions of the day. I now tell gym-bound friends that this kind of trip is the reward for bothering to get into any kind of shape. It's the StairMaster with wildflowers and hill towns.

In fact you don't have to be in tip-top shape to perform admirably on a cycling trip. If you are unable or disinclined to practice bicycling where you live, the best preparation is not, as you might expect it to be, a stationary bicycle. As Lauren Hefferon, the founder of Ciclismo Classico, a company based in Cambridge, Massachusetts, that specializes in tours of Italy, explained to me before my trip, a stair-climbing machine like the StairMaster best mimics the motion of cycling. (The pre-trip booklet Hefferon sends out includes excellent introductory articles about bicycling technique and safety, and also a better crash course on Italian culture, food, and logistics than most guidebooks supply.) My fellow travelers were in their forties, fifties, and sixties; some had been exercising regularly, some had not, and all chose their own pace. Couples of different abilities frequently separated, meeting in a particular village or at one of the farms or happily odd rendezvous points our guides had sought out.

The B&R daily drill is similar to that of most other cycling tours. One guide rides with the group and the other drives the van, which holds a seeming warehouseful of biking gear and food and drink. Everyone following the arranged route is offered fruit, juice, cookies, and tempting tidbits whenever the van passes by, and can ride in it over challenging passages. Also, the van holds repair equipment, including the all-important pump. It was my luck to change inner tubes three times during the trip, once because I didn't realize that the valve on a gas-station pump is often the wrong kind for a bike and when attached to a tire lets out all the air (all right, twice; when I got home, I bought a valve adapter for a dollar). Even if everything else B&R supplied was exemplary, my portable pump broke, making a slapstick routine of my efforts to follow the tire-changing instructions everyone carries along. This gave me the chance to practice my rudimentary Spanish and hitch rides from obliging passersby, who helped me learn how to fit a bicycle into a small trunk.

It all seemed a lark, because for once while traveling I had no appointments to keep—and, even more important, I knew that whatever scrapes I got into while exploring independent of the group, help was just a phone call away.

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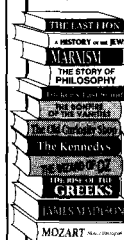


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The van is a crucial element of the success of the trips: it is a traveling safety net for those who are unfamiliar with bike repair, and of course it transports the luggage.

The other crucial element is the guides. Unflappable and wonderfully resourceful, they set the tone. Before our warm-up ride a couple who had been on several B&R trips (alumni are loyal; I was the only first-timer) said, "Once we get here, it's all in their hands. Anything that goes wrong, it's their problem." I found this callous. By about the fourth day I had adopted the same attitude. I reveled in the freedom of being able to pack just a notebook, map, sunscreen, snack, and windbreaker in my handlebar bag for a full day, and of knowing that when we were changing hotels (roughly every third day), the guides would be sure our luggage was waiting in our rooms. I simply picked up my key and headed for the shower.

Too, the guides were utterly in tune with the region, both having lived in Spain (Victoria Bake grew up in Madrid). They urged us to adopt the local customs, which meant not just eating late but extending the evening with beer and sherry at tapas bars, conversing with anyone who looked interesting. Donnell, a bullfight fanatic who wears little bulls dangling from her ears, took a group of skeptical first-timers to the Cordoba arena and managed to make us all want to go back. If anyone had a special interest (local pottery, traces of Moorish architecture), the guides kept an eye out. Mine was olives, and one day they found an olive nursery for me to visit.

On our first morning Bake and Donnell came in to breakfast bearing paper conesful of *churros*, or crullers, which one dunks in hot chocolate thick enough to be a dip. One afternoon they led us to a rehearsal at which an animated group of teenagers was practicing songs for this year's pilgrimage to El Rocio, an Andalusian town where the Virgin is said to have appeared; every year pilgrims learn new songs to keep up their energy for the days-long walk. The unexpected force of harmony slapping against stucco walls in a tiny courtyard brought most of us to tears. Afterward the chorus members demonstrated the steps to this year's variations on the Sevillana, a classic form of flamenco, and invited us to join in.

One day we were treated to a surprise picnic lunch on the terrace of a farm and hunting lodge overlooking vineyards and orange groves; the guides artfully set out local cheeses, the superb local ham, a *tortilla*, or flat omelet with potatoes, the season's first asparagus and strawberries, and local wine and sherry. Another day they arranged for the chef of our hotel to journey into the nearby hills and prepare us an enormous, and very good, pan of paella. The van even yielded tatami mats for a siesta under the olive trees.

WARY AS I AM of any enterprise that requires new clothes, especially if they weigh down luggage, I packed a few items recommended by friends, and was glad to have most (but not all) of them. Stiff-soled sneakers help you pedal more efficiently than the normal thick-soled ones, which in any case won't fit easily into toe clips. Toe clips are optional, because some people find them tricky to slip in and out of, but I quickly got used to them and came to rely on the help they offered when going uphill. An eighteen-speed bike, the kind B&R supplies, might sound overcomplicated, but in fact the choice of gears enables you to negotiate virtually any terrain comfortably: the lowest "granny gear" will keep you pedaling up steep hills, and the high gears make whizzing downhill safer. I found a pair of Shimano brand shoes, flexible enough for walking but rigid enough for biking, for less than \$50. Wearing a helmet is mandatory, although companies don't enforce this rule. Soon I felt naked without one (and in the first days I kept reaching for a seat belt). Padded gloves help keep your hands from going numb as you clutch the handlebars while riding downhill. They also cause stigmata of which I became inordinately proud: suntanned ovals on the backs of the hands, which semaphore "cyclist" to those who merit the name.

An unexpected benefit of a cycling tour is how light you can pack. Biking clothes weigh next to nothing, and you need many fewer changes of good clothes than usual, since you will wear them only a few hours each evening. Two items I took back to the store were a fanny pack, unnecessary with the handlebar bag and the zippered pockets in my shorts, and a biking jer-

sey with the pockets on the back—evidently convenient for cyclists hunched over dropped handlebars, but silly on a touring bike. I wore T-shirts all week, and had a flimsy but effective windbreaker for morning and evening. One that's waterproof will help in the case of rain; rain pants, though, will stick uncomfortably to your legs.

The most important goal of my advance shopping was to guard against saddle sores, and so I bought the most heavily padded shorts I could find—not too clinging, luckily, since one part of biking I will not embrace is ridiculous clothes. I also ordered a padded seat cover from B&R. The cover, brand-named Spenco, has a hard foam lining that conforms to your body, and was worth the \$50 it cost, though you can get one for about half that price at your local bike store. If even this is insufficient, you can follow the advice of an experienced friend of mine for additional padding between backside and seat top: "Sanitary napkins," she whispered.

IN CHOOSING a part of the world in which you might want to bicycle, consider the condition of the secondary roads, the only kind you will want to ride on. Those in Andalusia were often gravelly and full of pot-holes. If so many companies seem to concentrate their tours in France and Italy, it's because French and Italian roads are in good condition, and because whenever you feel fatigued, there is likely to be an inviting village coming up—not the case in Andalusia, starkly handsome as much of the olive-tree-covered landscape is. Find out when the rainy season is, since wet weather is even less desirable than usual when you are spending the whole day outside.

You can also choose among tour companies, depending principally on your budget. Butterfield & Robinson (416-864-1354 or 800-678-1147), although the best-known luxury-bicycle-trip firm, is by no means alone. Its closest rival is Travent International (802-244-5153 or 800-325-3009), a company started by two former B&R employees. Travent groups stay in similarly luxurious inns and pay similarly high prices: \$2,300 to \$3,000 for a week in Europe, not including airfare or a supplemental single-occupancy charge of \$175 to \$500. Backroads (510-527-1555 or 800-462-2848), probably the largest bike-

tour company in the United States, offers tours in Europe, North and Central America, Asia, and the Pacific, at somewhat lower prices.

Several smaller companies reflect the passions of their owners, who want to share their pleasure in cycling through a country they love. Ciclismo Classico (617-628-7314 or 800-866-7314) offers the widest range of Italy tours—at moderate prices, which likely explains why its average customers are younger (in their late thirties and early forties) than those of the luxury companies. ExperiencePlus! Specialty Tours (303-484-8489), formerly called Italian Specialty Tours, owned by Rick Price and his Italian-born wife, Paola, offers a limited number of tours at very reasonable prices not only in Italy but also in Oregon and Colorado; accommodations, naturally, are simpler as prices get lower.

Other companies about which I've heard good reports include Timberline Bicycle Tours (303-759-3804), with tours mostly in the American West; VCC Four Seasons Cycling, with tours mostly in the East (802-244-5135); Bicycle Adventures (206-786-0989 or 800-443-6060), with tours in Hawaii and the Pacific Northwest; Classic Adventures (716-964-8488 or 800-777-8090), with tours in many European countries and in North America; and Gerhard's Bicycle Odysseys (503-223-2402), with tours in Switzerland, Germany, Austria, and other northern European countries. Other companies can be found in the advertisements in *Bicycling* magazine.

I couldn't wait to go on another trip, and so I broke away to Umbria, in Italy, for four days of cycling just six weeks after my first trip. This was a larger group—twenty, an average size for most companies. As before, there were mostly B&R veterans, including two couples who once a year leave their children behind to go bicycling, because, one woman told me, "This is about the farthest thing away from kids."

The several groups of friends, and one family having a kind of reunion, proved what I suspected: a bicycle trip, with its daytime adventures and evening companionship, is the ideal way for friends to see each other. And see each other at their best. It's hard not to stay in a good mood when you're revitalized—and tanned where it counts. □

Canada

The World Next Door

Below is a sampling of the many cultural offerings this season.

Newfoundland & Labrador:

Through August 7

Stephenville Festival, the renowned regional theater festival

Saskatchewan: Through August 17

Royal Canadian Mounted Police Sunset Retreat Ceremony, with music and pageantry

Prince Edward Island:

Through September 25

Charlottetown Festival, a showcase of Canadian musical theater

Ontario: Through November 14

Stratford Festival, North America's largest repertory theater event

Manitoba: August 1-14

Folklorama, the world's largest multicultural festival

Nova Scotia: August 5-15

Halifax International BuskerFest, the world's largest festival of street performers

New Brunswick: August 6-15

Festival by the Sea, a national performing-arts festival

Québec: August 7-15

Festival de Montgolfières, an exciting hot-air-balloon festival

Yukon Territory: August 13-16

Dawson City Discovery Days, a celebration of the 1896 discovery of gold in the Yukon

Alberta: August 14-22

International Native Arts Festival, traditional dance, crafts, and music

British Columbia: October 1-10

Okanagan Wine Festival, a popular grape harvest celebration

Northwest Territories: October 8-11

Delta Daze, with street dances, parades, and regional fare

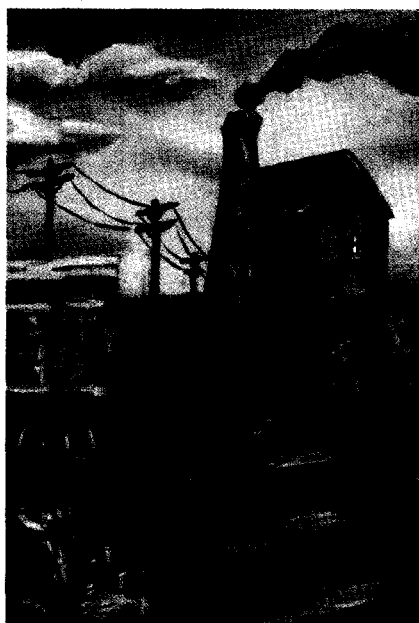
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Books

Justice to Theodore Dreiser

On the greatness of a writer whom critics have long treated with either scorn or condescension

by Michael Lydon



IN 1915, WHEN *The "Genius,"* just published, was being lambasted by critics, Theodore Dreiser got a fervent letter of support from a young poet in Washington, D.C. Touched, Dreiser wrote back his thanks and added "a kindly bit of advice" in closing: "Never bother to know me, personally. Remain illusioned, if you can."

Any admirer of Theodore Dreiser's novels who is tempted to learn more about Dreiser the man may be wise to follow his advice. Richard Lingeman's two-volume life (1986 and 1990), now re-issued by John Wiley & Sons as *Theodore Dreiser: An American Journey*, abridged in one fat paperback, is more sympathetic than W. A. Swanberg's 1965 *Dreiser*, but the portrait that emerges is still that of a sage who for obstinacy, irascibility, obsessive sexuality, and overall inconsistency between high-minded word and small-minded deed has no match in modern literature but Leo Tolstoy.

Dreiser was a hypochondriac, drank too much, and had a nervous habit of folding and refolding his handkerchief. He philandered, and philandered on his philanderings; despite buckteeth, a cast in one eye, and a shambling gait, he attracted women with what one called his animal magnetism. He quarreled with publishers over royalty statements and movie studios over script control, and even quarreled with H. L. Mencken, who had fought at his side in early battles against the censors. He plagiarized poetry from Sherwood Anderson and journalism from Dorothy Thompson—the latter incident just before he openly campaigned for the 1930 Nobel Prize and lost it to Sinclair Lewis, Thompson's husband. When Dreiser and Lewis met soon after, at a star-studded literary dinner in Manhattan, Lewis called Dreiser on the plagiarism, and Dreiser slapped Lewis in the face.

Dreiser studied science for years yet

remained superstitious—he believed, for instance, that hunchbacks brought him luck. His politics veered all over the map, from the bohemian radicalism of turn-of-the-century Greenwich Village to the anti-Semitism that he shared with Mencken. Sometimes Dreiser loved "the people," sometimes he considered them "potato minds." In the 1930s he was drawn to communism, but he didn't mind when Hitler attacked England, because he hated aristocrats. Only when Hitler attacked Russia did Dreiser decide that the Nazis were no good. He finally joined the Communist Party in 1945, just months before his death, but this proved not to be a clear-cut last statement, because he also started going to church—after having railed for years against religion. As a final indignity (or dignity—it's hard to say which), Dreiser was buried in Hollywood's Forest Lawn cemetery, beside the movie cowboy Tom Mix.

DREISER'S WRITING career was as lopsided as his character. While an ambitious twenty-eight-year-old itinerant journalist, he wrote *Sister Carrie* quickly in 1899-1900. Frank Norris spotted it for Doubleday, but after Frank and especially Mrs. Doubleday realized that Carrie was a chorus girl who rose in the world through loose living, Doubleday suppressed its own edition, selling only 456 copies. For several years Dreiser drifted in depression. *Jennie Gerhardt*, in 1911, marked the full return of his powers, and he published three novels in the next four years: *The Financier* and *The Titan*, the first two volumes of the Trilogy of Desire, about the capitalist Frank Cowperwood, in 1912 and 1914, and *The "Genius,"* a fictionalized autobiography, in 1915. Several years later Dreiser began what became his magnum opus, *An American Tragedy*; it appeared in 1925 to tremendous acclaim. After that, silence. No more Dreiser novels were published while he lived; *The Bulwark*, for which he had made the first notes in 1912, and *The Stoic*, the last volume of the trilogy, came out posthumously in 1946 and 1947.

The incongruities of Dreiser's life matter as much as they do because they have always affected the critical reception of his work. An air of venerability has gathered about him, and *Sister Carrie*, of course, has been accepted as a masterpiece. But Dreiser remains the great gawk of American literature (a "peasant," Mencken called him), the poor-born, ill-educated German-American Hoosier from Terre Haute, an oaf with mud on his shoes who invaded the drawing rooms of the genteel to talk about sex and, even worse, money.

An examination of Dreiser criticism reveals, among nods to his greatness, a surprising number of sharp barbs. Lionel Trilling, for example, clearly despised Dreiser; his essay in *The Liberal Imagination* drips with sarcasm: "No one, I suppose, has ever represented Dreiser as a masterly intellect." F. O. Matthiessen, who wrote the first major posthumous critique, felt that Dreiser "was never to display much invention, which indicates a severe limitation to his imaginative resources." In a book he called *Homage to Theodore Dreiser*, Robert Penn Warren still found *The "Genius"* a "crashing bore." The critics' most constant complaint has been that Dreiser wrote badly. "Dreiser simply does not know how to write, never did

know, never wanted to know," Arnold Bennett declared in 1930, a theme that Alfred Kazin continued in 1959 ("occasional vulgarity of style . . . unevenness of style . . . clumsiness") and John Updike brought into 1991 ("so muddled is his prose. . . not only awkward but careless").

Kazin also pointed out, however, that Dreiser's novels had "survived sixty years of complaint against Dreiser." Now it is ninety. As the centenary of Dreiser's emergence approaches, it is time to drop the barbs and acknowledge, without reservation, that Theodore Dreiser is an immortal, a giant who stands with Cooper, Hawthorne, Melville, Twain, and James among Americans, and with Balzac, Hugo, Flaubert, Dickens, Eliot, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Lawrence, and Solzhenitsyn among moderns. Except for O'Neill and Faulkner, Dreiser's contemporaries stand in his shade. Howells, Wharton, Lewis, Fitzgerald, and Hemingway are fine writers; so are Farrell, O'Hara, Chandler, and Cain. None tells all that Dreiser tells. Dreiser sees more; he understands more. The most patient and observant of American writers, Dreiser lets his pen follow life, finding words to fit its appearing and dissolving forms, weighting every sentence with data absorbed from research and experience. Thick with time and place, peopled by fully fleshed characters, Dreiser's novels convey the very dust hanging in the air of his restless, crowded cities.

THE EIGHT NOVELS may be seen in four groups: *Sister Carrie* and *Jennie Gerhardt*, two portraits, one cool, the other tender, of women outside convention; *The Financier*, *The Titan*, and *The Stoic*, the trilogy that follows Cowperwood's buccaneering path from Philadelphia to Chicago to London to New York; *The "Genius"* and *The Bulwark*, again two portraits, one blackly comic, the other elegiac, of very different men, the eccentric artist Eugene Witla and the sober Quaker Solon Barnes; and *An American Tragedy*, a mountain of a book and a group unto itself. All the novels are replete with the time-honored pleasures of big-canvas books—vivid characters acting out passionate dramas in imaginary worlds as intricately real as our own. Like all the great realists, Dreiser had an extraordinary gift for capturing both the suspense of the moment and the slow



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curves of life and death, the turn of centuries.

Balzac inspired the young writer to paint, as Dreiser put it, "American pictures here, as opposed to French pictures there," and because he doggedly described what his world and characters looked like, his novels, like Remington's paintings of the cowboy West, have value as compressed, accurate renditions of the American past. In *The "Genius,"* Dreiser made his fictionalized self, Eugene Witla, a newspaper illustrator who became a realist of the Ashcan School, who could paint street scenes "forceful in the peculiar massing of their blacks, the unexpected, almost flashing, use of a streak of white." One of Witla's street scenes—"Fifth Avenue in a snow storm, the battered, shabby bus pulled by a team of lean, unkempt, bony horses"—Dreiser took from an Alfred Stieglitz photograph. Exteriors were Witla's forte; Dreiser himself could paint interiors as sumptuous as Sargent's. Here is the mansion of Senator Mark Simpson in *The Financier*:

In his reception hall were replicas of Caligula, Nero, and other Roman emperors; and on his stair-walls reliefs of dancing nymphs in procession, and priests bearing offerings of sheep and swine. . . . Handsome tiger and leopard skin rugs, the fur of a musk-ox for his divan, and tanned and brown-stained goat and kid skins for his tables. . . .

This word-painter stance gave Dreiser his fundamental point of view: the watchful passer-by, who mingles with the crowd he observes. In the opening scene of *An American Tragedy*, as often elsewhere, Dreiser placed himself (and the reader) among a "vagrom and unstable street throng," this time clerks and idlers who stop for a moment to watch the Griffiths family sing weak hymns at dusk on a Kansas City street:

As they sang, this nondescript and indifferent street audience gazed, held by the peculiarity of such an unimportant-looking family publicly raising its collective voice against the vast skepticism and apathy of life.

Compare this opening with the second chapter of *Adam Bede* and see in a flash the sharp contrast between the hopeful warmth of George Eliot's vision and the bleak American loneliness of Dreiser's. Eliot also painted evening preaching to the unconverted, and we

sense both writers' interest in the moral voice speaking up in the daily hubbub. With Eliot, however, we are in a country village, and her preacher is the beautiful Dinah Morris, whose voice, "like a fine instrument" brings "tears . . . into some of the hardest eyes." The Griffiths, on the other hand, sing next to an alley "bare of life." Elvira, the mother, conveys a "fighting faith" in God's wisdom; otherwise, Dreiser's "little band of six," including the twelve-year-old Clyde shifting from foot to foot, are "flabby," "emasculate . . . with no real mental force," and the crowd forgets them as soon as they stop.

Dreiser hung his pictures on rock-solid structures. He found unity by building each novel around a single character—Carrie, Jennie, Cowperwood, Eugene, Clyde, Solon. In *Sister Carrie* he added a strong second character, Carrie's lover George Hurstwood. Hurstwood falls and Carrie rises as the story moves from Chicago to New York; *Sister Carrie's* structure is thus a bold X anchored in two big cities. A triangle is at the heart of *An American Tragedy*—Clyde Griffiths and his two loves, the sweet factory girl Roberta Alden and the society flirt Sondra Finchley. By the time Clyde tries to escape his triangular trap by murdering Roberta, it has already split him in two. When playing tennis with Sondra's set,

of a sudden he would wake to realize that he was fumbling or playing badly—that Bertine or Sondra or Grant was calling: "Oh, Clyde, what are you thinking of, anyhow?" And from the darkest depths of his heart he would have answered, had he spoken, "Roberta."

Many other realists have also built on stable structures, but Dreiser was uniquely able to convey instability as well. Formlessness fascinated this master of form and runs like a lyric counter-melody through his writing. Dreiser gave the street numbers of his characters' houses and declared them dreaming spirits lost in a billowing universe. Man is "a creature of incalculable variety" (*Sister Carrie*), subject to "little blood moods . . . zephyr-like emanations of emotions" (*The Titan*). Cowperwood thinks of the earth as "a little ball in immeasurable reaches of ether," and Witla doubts that anything orders "the shifting, subtle forces of nature."

By blending form and fluidity with

nearly invisible skill, Dreiser rounded off the rough edges of his structures, made them flexible. The structure of *Jennie Gerhardt* is one long legato curve; Dreiser followed the events of "well-rounded" Jennie's placid life as if he were watching twigs and leaves float by in a stream. Though enormous, the trilogy's structure curves with the earth as it spans half a continent and the Atlantic Ocean. By allowing both will and accident, both eros and convention, to shape his work, Dreiser achieved the fumbling give-and-take that is the hallmark of his realism and, like an architect who plans for earthquake, did much to ensure long life for his creations.

HOW DID DREISER paint his pictures and build his structures? By writing superb English prose. Here I disagree most heartily with Dreiser's critics. Dreiser wrote badly? An awkward sentence here and there, perhaps; Dreiser might have nodded, along with Homer. Much more striking is page after page of durable English in the plainspoken tradition of the King James Bible and Daniel Defoe, simple words in supple sentences. Dreiser didn't point at or point up his prose, because his goal was not that we see his words but that we see *through* the words to the world he was writing to create. His prose can be dense when it delves into money matters (how Philadelphia sold its municipal bonds after the Civil War, for example) that other writers find too knotty to tackle. Passion makes Dreiser's prose leap hissing off the page, here from *The "Genius"*:

If she could only find them together and kill them! How she would like to strike her on the mouth! How tear her hair and her eyes out! . . . She was a real tigress now, her eyes gleaming, her red lips wet. She would kill her! kill her!! kill her!!!

The Bulwark, perhaps, contains Dreiser's most eloquent prose. When he was writing the Cowperwood novels, a young woman told him about her father, a devout Quaker. Intrigued by the idea of a good man in the city, the opposite of the wolfish Cowperwood, Dreiser made notes and then dropped and went back to the idea for decades, settling down to finish it only in his last months. *The Bulwark* is shorter than the other novels, painted in broader strokes. Dreiser suit-

ed his style to Solon Barnes's quiet sobriety and homely Quaker speech: the prose sings like bowed tones from a bass viol. Solon prospers as a Philadelphia banker but remains simple, even quitting the bank to protest unethical loans to unscrupulous businessmen. His children, however, yearn to be regular Americans, and Dreiser built their conflict to a shattering climax: Stewart, a boy as weak and handsome as Clyde Griffiths, participates in a gang rape in which a girl is accidentally killed, and commits suicide. Solon's beloved wife, Benecia, dies of grief, leaving Solon to fight desperately for his faith in God. Walking one day in the garden, Solon startles a puff adder, who first swells up defensively and then glides over his shoe as if to say, Solon realizes, that he knows Solon meant no harm. Overjoyed, Solon tells his daughters that now he knows "there are more languages spoken than we have any knowledge of."

"What does thee mean, Father?" questioned Isobel.

"I mean that good intent is of itself a universal language, and if our intention is good, all creatures in their particular way understand, and so it was that this puff adder understood me just as I understood it. . . ."

Solon's triumphant discovery is *The Bulwark's* second climax. Even more it is Dreiser's last triumph: the discovery by a master writer of a language without words. □

The Passion of Modernity

by Stanley Hoffmann

NATIONALISM:
FIVE ROADS TO MODERNITY
by Liah Greenfeld.
Harvard University Press, \$49.95.

OF ALL THE secular ideologies that have moved men and women to action in the past couple of centuries, nationalism now appears to be the most widespread—and the toughest survivor. It has led to the unification of peoples who had been living under a variety of rulers but felt that they belonged in a single state, such as the citi-

zens of nineteenth-century Germany and Italy. More frequently nationalism has resulted in the disintegration of multi-ethnic states and empires, such as the Ottoman Empire, Austria-Hungary, and, today, Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union. It has also provoked the collapse of colonial empires, once the colonizing powers found themselves too weak to resist the onslaught of peoples who had never in the past formed nations but now caught the contagion of the nation-state and became determined to obtain their independence and sovereignty. The demand for national self-determination had been endorsed by liberals: in France during the French Revolution, in England by John Stuart Mill, in the United States by Woodrow Wilson. Today liberals are beginning to recoil, because at the same time that economic interdependence is emptying sovereignty of substance, demands for sovereignty are multiplying—leading to a proliferation of conflicts and the risk of endless challenges to existing borders in a futile quest for the perfect "pure" nation-state. Meanwhile, migrations old and new have made it almost impossible to avoid the presence of minorities on the soil of any conceivable unit (unless it succeeds in closing off its borders completely and in expelling all such minorities—another recipe for disorder and tragedy).

Attempts at transcending nationalism and the nation-state have been far less effective than the ideology itself. The United Nations and other international organizations have limited resources and powers and can only try to cope with the conflicts that the quest for self-determination constantly provokes. Communism, which pretended to transcend nationalism and to reorganize the political universe on the basis of class alone, did not ultimately succumb because of nationalism, but it began to split because of it: remember Tito's defection in 1948, the USSR-China split a dozen years later, and the war between China and Vietnam in 1979. And once communism collapsed in the USSR and Eastern Europe under the weight of its economic and political rigidities, national quarrels re-emerged with a vengeance. The attempt by the European Community to move the peoples of Western Europe beyond the nation-state has been only partly successful. It has integrated their economies, and made war among them inconceivable,

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but their politics remain distinct, and the EC's own ideologues have never been able to explain how one could create a truly unified Europe without simultaneously creating a new European nationalism to replace the nationalisms of its members. No such European nationalism exists, and many of the champions of a united Europe do not want to see it anyhow, because they are afraid of the ugly aspects of nationalism. But in its absence the EC remains above all a utilitarian arrangement that serves the interests of the member states and can go only as far as the national governments and their citizenries allow it to go.

The literature on nationalism is not as impressive as one would expect, given the importance of the phenomenon. For a long time, before and just after the Second World War, what flourished was principally the study of the *idea* of nationalism: the intellectual history of the concept and of the writers, poets, historians, and geographers who celebrated it. This told us little about its appeal, about the reasons for its spread or for its hold on the imaginations of millions of people. Later came the sociologists, who analyzed nationalism as a process of social communications and interactions (rather than as an idea)—a part of the sweeping advance of “modernity,” of which capitalism was seen as the most important manifestation. Lost in this shift was the rich texture and diversity of the nationalist phenomenon; we got taxonomies instead. We also got books, usually by Marxist historians, that looked at this phenomenon as something irrational, an atavistic anachronism that was bound to disappear sooner or later in a rationally organized universe.

These days social scientists often thirst for general theories, grand testable hypotheses, structural analyses, and quantifiable results. Nationalism does not lend itself to these. One of its strengths, and the reason for its durability and resilience, is its diversity. It may well be true that nationalism has played, and continues to play, a vital role as a kind of substitute for religion in parts of the world where religious faith has declined, but it can also ally itself with religious surges, as in the case of Islamic fundamentalism. And since nationalism responds to local circumstances, feeds on the peculiarities of a multitude of social and political systems, colors authoritarian as well as liberal ideologies, and can be promoted by any class or coal-

tion of interests, it is too elusive to be easily captured and dissected by modern social scientists. They are often more interested in the evolution and operation of structures (such as class systems or capitalism) than in the feelings, desires, and needs of human beings, and when they gingerly approach social psychology, they do so with highly rudimentary concepts and hypotheses. As a result, our understanding of the appeal of nationalism and of its multiple manifestations and perversions leaves a great deal to be desired.

THIS EXPLAINS why Liah Greenfeld's new book, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity*, has been received with a great deal of respect and even awe. Greenfeld is a young sociologist who came to this country from Israel, where she had lived for a while after emigrating from the Soviet Union. Her boldness is breathtaking: “This book is an attempt to understand the world in which we live. Its fundamental premise is that nationalism lies at the basis of this world.” Greenfeld deals with five enormous cases: England, France, Russia, Germany, and the United States. She is curious about the interplay of ideas and interests, and tries to identify the groups in whose interest it was to adopt the idea of the nation. But—unlike many present-day social scientists, who see passions as a kind of overflow of interests, and ideologies as the rationalization of interests—she does not believe that history is the product of rational decisions by people and groups engaged in a cool calculation of benefits and losses.

A key factor in Greenfeld's analysis is *ressentiment*, “a psychological state resulting from suppressed feelings of envy and hatred . . . and the impossibility of satisfying these feelings”; she sees nationalism as often growing out of the resentment that certain groups feel toward a society that deprives them of or undermines the status to which they feel entitled. She also sees the idea of the nation as “*the constitutive element of modernity*”: “Rather than define nationalism by its modernity, I see modernity as defined by nationalism.” She points out the initial link between nationalism and democracy: “Democracy was born with the sense of nationality”; both locate sovereignty in the people and proclaim “the fundamental

equality among [the people's] various strata.” But this connection does not always prevail, and Greenfeld divides nationalism into two categories: “individualistic-libertarian” nationalism, a form of civic nationalism which stresses the rights of individuals and conceives of the nation as an association of equal and free individuals; and “collectivistic-authoritarian” nationalism, which celebrates not the “actual sovereignty of individuals” but a collective being, the Nation, endowed with a will of its own. This kind of nationalism can be either civic, when “nationality is at least in principle open and voluntaristic; it can and sometimes must be acquired,” or ethnic, the more usual case, when only members of the dominant ethnic group constitute the Nation.

To study her five cases, Liah Greenfeld has read voraciously, in four languages, memoirs, diaries, private correspondence, “laws and official proclamations, . . . works of literature” and political philosophy, and a vast number of secondary works. She covers a period of five centuries, from the beginning of the sixteenth century to the present, although her focus is on the formative period of national identity and consciousness in each case. Some of the most stimulating passages are set pieces—not digressions, for they are important to her study, but stories that can be read almost independent of it: the role of science and empirical knowledge in seventeenth-century England, German Romanticism, American attitudes toward intellectuals. The book is thought-provoking, and one can only pay tribute to the author's ambition, erudition, and stamina. At a time when much of social science either reduces the most profound human experiences to equations or tells us more and more about less and less, Greenfeld's intellectual audacity and her civic concern (she does not conceal her preference for “individualistic-libertarian” nationalism) must be applauded.

And yet this is a flawed book. Two kinds of flaws have to be distinguished: those of her design and those of the specific case studies. The main weakness in design is displayed on the very first page, where Greenfeld tells us,

The word “nationalism” is used here as an umbrella term under which are subsumed the related phenomena of national identity (or nationality) and consciousness, and collectivities

based on them—nations; occasionally, it is employed to refer to the articulate ideology on which national identity and consciousness rest, though not—unless specified—to the politically activist, xenophobic variety of national patriotism, which it frequently designates.

This is a real mess. On the one hand, Greenfeld lumps together such different concepts as *nation*, which *The Oxford English Dictionary* defines as “an extensive aggregate of persons, so closely associated with each other by common descent, language, or history, as to form a distinct race or people, usually organized as a separate political state and occupying a definite territory” (a definition full of inevitable hedges); *national identity*, the material and spiritual, physical and behavioral, features that are characteristic of a given nation and distinguish it from all others; *national consciousness*, the subjective self-image that citizens have of their nation, which often selects only some features of the national identity, or distorts them, or invents new ones; *patriotism*, which is a sense of attachment and loyalty to one’s nation; *nationality*, which is a legal concept; and *nationalism*, which is an ideology, a program of action that sets goals (and, more often than not, defines and defies enemies). Much of the trouble with the book results from the blending of these quite distinct notions, and readers would do well to ask themselves at every moment which of them the author is actually discussing. The most interesting object of study is the relationship between national consciousness and nationalism—between the way in which different groups in the population conceive of the nation and the specific programs, propaganda efforts, campaigns, and so forth that leading intellectuals, political activists, and agitators put forward. National consciousness may grow in the absence of any nationalist ideology; nationalism as an ideology can foster national consciousness and modify it; yet a strong national self-image can limit the appeal of, or neutralize, nationalistic ideologies incompatible with it. In order to study these connections, one has to begin by disentangling the two notions, and this Greenfeld fails to do.

On the other hand, insofar as she focuses on the ideology of nationalism, primarily in the chapters on Russia and

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In May of 1989, James Baker, declared in an address to AIPAC (American Israel Public Affairs Committee) that the Jewish state should once and for all forget about “the dream of a greater Israel”. It was the first time that this phrase had been heard from the lips of a Western statesman. What does it mean? Does it have any relation to reality?

What are the facts?

Stripes on the flag. Arab propaganda has it that the two stripes on the flag of Israel, above and below the star of David, represent the Nile and the Euphrates River, respectively, and signify Israel’s expansionist desire to form an empire that would supposedly reach from Cairo to Baghdad. But that has no basis in fact, of course. Nowhere in any documents of the Jewish state, in any statement by even the most “radical” spokesman can any reference to anything like that be found.

Israel’s Borders. “Palestine”, part of the Ottoman Empire before World War I, came under British mandate after that war. The Golan Heights were part of Palestine. Israel’s current borders are the result of the 1948 War of Independence, in which six Arab armies invaded the new-born state, but were utterly defeated, and the 1967 Six-Day War, in which those same armies once again invaded Israel. In that war, Israel conquered the Gaza Strip, the vast Sinai Peninsula, and the Golan Heights. And Israel also repossessed the provinces of Judea/Samaria, (the “West Bank”), and the eastern part of Jerusalem, which had been occupied by the Jordani-

ans nineteen years earlier when they invaded the just new-born Jewish state. In order to achieve peace with Egypt, Israel returned to it all of the Sinai. Israel is and has always been prepared to grant full autonomy to the Arabs living in Judea/Samaria. It is clear to all knowledgeable in military matters that, for immutable strategic reasons, Israel cannot for any foreseeable future abandon or yield military control of Judea/Samaria and of the Golan Heights.

The Myth of Greater Israel. Israel is one of the smallest countries in the world. Most people don’t realize how small it really is. One wonders whether former Secretary of State

Baker was aware of it when he uttered his memorable phrase of “Greater Israel”. A look at the map is revealing. Including the vaunted “West Bank”, the Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights,

Israel	France	California	Syria	Ecuador
10,840 sq. mi.	213,673 sq. mi.	160,222 sq. mi.	72,209 sq. mi.	110,688 sq. mi.



Greater Israel? It’s a myth. See for yourself!

the entire area of the country is barely over 10,000 square miles. France is twenty times as large as Israel, California fifteen times as large, Syria about seven times as large, and “tiny” Ecuador ten times as large. Israel is so small that its area is less than half the size of San Bernadino County, California; if it were dropped into Lake Michigan it would disappear from sight without a trace. The Arab countries in contrast are huge—they occupy twice the area of the United States.

It is clear that the concept of “Greater Israel”, lacks any validity and has no basis in fact. To apply such a concept to a country as small as Israel would almost seem a mockery. Obviously, Israel has no territorial ambitions. All it wants is to live in peace within secure and defensible borders, just as any other country and as required under U.N. Resolution No. 242. But it seems that the size of Israel, whether “greater” or “less-er” is not at all the concern of Israel’s implacable Arab enemies. The very existence of Israel, of a Jewish state in their midst of whatever size, is unacceptable to the Arabs. And unless that mindset changes, not until the Arab states have become democracies and have come to full acceptance of Israel, are willing to make true peace with it, and are prepared to establish normal and friendly relations with Israel can any possible territorial adjustment be considered. As it looks right now, that may still take some time.

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Germany, and insofar as her distaste for the "collectivistic-authoritarian" model of the nation is one of the most powerful foundations of her whole enterprise, leaving out the "xenophobic variety" means excluding a major part of the story (and, indeed, she finds she cannot leave it out completely). If "nationalism" today evokes the horrible images of rape and murder in Bosnia, of turmoil in Nagorno-Karabakh, and of the destruction of Muslim mosques in India, rather than the serene vision of Jules Michelet, Giuseppe Mazzini, and John Stuart Mill, who dreamed of a harmonious world of nation-states, it is because the xenophobic version of nationalism has tended to shape national consciousness more often than the liberal version.

A second flaw of design lies in the author's decision to focus on the beginnings of national identity and consciousness in each case. This means that she dwells on England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, on France from 1715 to 1789, and on Russia, Germany, and the United States during the second half of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth. If the book had been called *The Origins of National Consciousness in Five Cases*, this would have been fine. But Greenfeld herself recognizes that "the origins of a nationalism which define its nature" do not completely "shape its social and political expressions," and I would add that the nature of national consciousness is not determined or defined exclusively by its origins. The book is profoundly disappointing, especially if we are interested both in the later forms of national consciousness and in nationalist ideologies, because it leaves us on the threshold of the era in which international relations ceased to be merely the game of states and became the clash of nations—a clash that resulted in two world wars—with rival nationalist ideologies often clashing at home. For instance, Greenfeld abandons French nationalism at the beginning of the Revolution, just as it became the dominant force inside France and abroad, and she has nothing much to say about American national consciousness and nationalism in the twentieth century. Only in the cases of Russia and Germany does she go beyond origins, but the study of the later developments in Russia is very thin, and in the passionate chapter on Germany she tends to read

what is going to be the evil future into the past on which she concentrates; indeed, it is as if this future explained her interpretation of the past. Also, since the formative period for some nationalisms was later than for others, when we are learning about, say, Germany and the United States in the early parts of the nineteenth century, nothing is said about developments in Britain or France that occurred at the same time and may have influenced or paralleled what happened in the United States and Germany.

THIS BRINGS ME to the problems of the specific chapters. In the case of England one might ask whether the emergence of a national sentiment that Greenfeld calls "English" national consciousness ought not to have been called British. For, as the Yale historian Linda Colley has shown in her brilliant book on this subject, *Britons* (1992), what developed was a sense of nationhood that was superposed on and coexisted with English, Scottish, and Welsh loyalties. Colley, who focuses on the eighteenth century, and Greenfeld, who discusses the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, both stress the importance of Protestantism in that development. Greenfeld sees in the British brand of national consciousness the consciousness of one's dignity as an individual, and she connects it to the principles of individual liberty and political equality. She shows how struggles with the anti-Protestant Queen Mary, the early Stuarts, and other monarchs, in which the growing middle classes and a new aristocracy based on merit took part, shaped these liberal ideas and the ideal of the rational, empirical intellect. Since Greenfeld admires England, *ressentiment* has no place in her story. But Colley shows how in the eighteenth century Francophobia and war played important roles in the development of a British national sense, and she pays far more attention than Greenfeld to economic progress (profits as a source of patriotism) and to a focus on the monarchy, after the Glorious Revolution, as the source of pride and loyalty. Only in the chapter on the United States does Greenfeld tell us that the "idealistic" national consciousness she analyzed in the chapter on England had not been the only one, that there had also been a more conservative,

concrete, and materialistic one, "the emotional attachment to the land, government, and ways of England . . . an updated particularism, clothed in nationalistic rhetoric." It is the idealistic national consciousness she sees blooming in the United States, whereas "Englishmen in England tended toward the concrete or materialistic variety. . . ." One would never have guessed it from her chapter on England, although a reader of Colley's richly textured book would have known it.

Greenfeld's treatment of the French case is, to be blunt, far more wrong than right. She is right in pointing out (though she does so at excessive length) that "a narrow elite circle" had for centuries "the consciousness of being *French*," but that this was not yet a national consciousness. France was first seen as a Christian country; not until the seventeenth century did the polity become equated with the King. Only the Huguenots, in their bitter struggles with Catholics in the sixteenth century and with Louis XIV in the seventeenth, appealed to all the oppressed in modern terms, by calling for popular resistance. But the bulk of Greenfeld's story is the development of national consciousness by the eighteenth-century aristocracy, the truly revolutionary class. The aristocracy had lost its political power to the absolute and centralizing monarchy; it was losing its economic power to the rising bourgeoisie. It reacted by incorporating the intellectuals, rejecting and despising capitalism, and embracing the ideas that there was a French nation and that "the nobility was the bearer of the sovereignty of the polity." These ideas were imported from England, but anti-British *ressentiment* gave to concepts such as liberty, equality, and nation a very different meaning, one both collectivist and undemocratic. Take the word "nation."

From . . . a name for the association of free, rational individuals, it turned into a super-human collective person. . . . In England, it was the dignity of the individuals who composed it that dignified the collective body. . . . But in France it was the dignity of the whole that restored dignity to those who claimed membership in it.

Two things are wrong with this account. First, Greenfeld distorts the role of the aristocracy. Yes, the Revolution began as an aristocratic reaction against an absolute monarchy that had de-

prived the privileged castes of any power to block unwelcome changes in taxation and in the social order. But insofar as the modern idea of the nation is concerned, it was the bourgeoisie and the intellectuals who used it as a war machine against both the absolute monarchy and the privileged orders (Church and nobility). Second, she misreads Montesquieu, who was not merely a champion of the *thèse nobiliaire* (the idea of the nobility as the "legitimate, governing part of the sovereign nation") but also the great exponent of the British system of government, with its lower House representing the middle classes. And she misreads Rousseau, turning him into a Hegelian. It is true that Rousseau's conception of the general will, which captured the imagination of the French revolutionaries, sharply differs from the liberal emphasis on individual rights and limited government. But the sovereign nation is a democratic concept: the general will is not a force imposed on individuals, it is the will of all of us when we think, as citizens, about the common good. What makes Rousseau's idea dangerous is its utopian assumption that citizens will, if properly enlightened, always agree on what is the common good. It can be all too easily diverted and distorted by clever demagogues, but the conception is neither authoritarian nor truly collectivistic. The community is seen as an association of free and rational individuals, who, unlike the citizens of a liberal state, transfer all their rights as social beings to it and gain citizenship in exchange. If one wants to find a really authoritarian and collectivistic French nationalism, one has to wait for the end of the nineteenth century, with Maurice Barrès and Charles Maurras. Only then did a major part of the French nobility finally convert to nationalism, adopting that rather ugly ideology after a whole century of having rejected and despised the revolutionary, Rousseauistic nationalism of the Republicans, and of having devoted its loyalty to the absent King and the Pope in Rome.

The chapter on Russia dwells on the ambivalence of Russian thinkers toward the West—on the split between admirers of the West, who wanted Russia to use it as a model, and Slavophiles, who denied that Russian society and culture were inferior and that the West had anything good to offer.

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Both groups, Greenfeld tells us, were steeped in *ressentiment*.

In Slavophilism, this revulsion [against Russian reality] was transformed into excessive self-admiration. In Westernism, the very same sentiment led to the generalized revulsion against the existing world and to the desire to destroy it.

This is the Westernism that she sees in Leninism and the Russian Revolution. Admirers of the West, in her eyes, shared the Slavophiles' view of Russia as the anti-West but "still accepted the direction in which the West developed as the only way." I find this hard to follow. It is a curiously schematic and bloodless chapter, in which social and political realities barely figure, and here the absence of most of the past two centuries is particularly regrettable.

There is nothing bloodless about the chapter on Germany. Greenfeld's profound dislike of German nationalism animates every page. She sees it as a belated creation of "unattached" intellectuals who were resentful of their inferior and often miserable situation in a society dominated by aristocrats, divided into many authoritarian states, and endowed with a very small reading public. These intellectuals were attracted first by a form of religious mysticism called Pietism, which was egalitarian and emotional, stressed individual salvation rather than dogma, and associated beauty with blood. Later the intellectuals invented Romanticism, which demoted reason, exalted the irrational and unthinking feeling, and denounced the "unnatural" view of society propagated by the Enlightenment. The cult of action, the emphasis on the importance of geniuses and artists and on "the never-never land of the perfect Community"—all this resulted in "a new and sinister ideal of political leadership." Romantic philosophy is analyzed here entirely as the product of "the intellectuals' dissatisfaction with their personal situation," and German national consciousness as the direct product of another *ressentiment*: French invasion and occupation during the wars of the Revolution and of Napoleon. According to Greenfeld, "German nationalism is Romantic nationalism," with its view of Germany as the only pure and perfect nation, and of the West as the "antimodel." She makes a long, brilliant, and highly questionable

digression into Marxism, which she describes as a kind of inversion of nationalism involving simple substitutions of class for nation, the proletariat for Germany, and capitalism for the West, still the embodiment of evil.

Quite apart from the issue of whether Marx was really, as she thinks, a German nationalist, there are many problems with this chapter. Why did Romanticism in Germany lead to a political philosophy and a kind of nationalism so profoundly different from those that it fostered in France? Why did the view of Germany as the nation that expressed humanity most fully lead to results far more "sinister" than the quite similar view of France held by Michelet? Is it fair to read Hegel as a totalitarian? Greenfeld would have been well inspired to read the late political theorist Judith Shklar's books, *After Utopia* (1957), on Romanticism, and *Freedom and Independence* (1976), on Hegel. How did German hatred of the West settle on an "Asiatic" race, the Jews, and how did they become "the principal embodiment of Western degeneracy"? How did the old Christian anti-Semitism become the modern hatred of the Jews as a race? In order to understand German nationalism and why "German national identity was from the outset defined as a racial identity," one needs answers to all these questions, but they are not provided, nor are the questions even asked, by Greenfeld. Her main concern seems to be to show that "Germany was ready for the Holocaust from the moment German national identity existed." Providing answers would have required, here again, moving much further into the nineteenth century, and examining both the pseudoscientific forms and the social appeals of modern racism. Moreover, no reader of this chapter would guess that there were also German defenders of a conception of the nation derived from the Enlightenment and steeped in liberalism.

The chapter on the United States presents American national sentiment as the blossoming of the idealistic British conception, imported by the immigrants who came to this country with a pre-existing (English) national identity. The revolt against British violations of their rights transformed it into an American national identity, which was later adopted by immigrants who came with no pre-existing national feelings. "They embraced American identity ea-

gerly," Greenfeld writes, "because only as Americans were they elevated to the status of men." She spends only a few pages on the Civil War (she sees the South as having had a nascent ideology that would, like Germany's and Russia's, have been racial, anti-capitalist, and authoritarian). She is more interested in refuting Richard Hofstadter's thesis about anti-intellectualism in America. Citing Ralph Waldo Emerson, she stresses the individual American's enthusiasm for knowledge and culture and dismisses the intellectuals' lament as mere annoyance at the refusal of Americans to pay special respect to professional thinkers, as a result of which the intelligentsia has eschewed "patriotic effusions" and retreated into universities, to become an aristocracy of merit within the larger democracy. This, in turn, has produced a cultural vacuum in the society at large, which mass culture fills—but the removal of intellectuals to the ivory tower has probably been good for social and political stability.

Again, much is left out, and much is questionable. Hofstadter was talking not about Emerson but about manifestations of a refusal to take seriously ideas devoid of obvious practical application, and about various forms of evangelism and primitivism. These have almost no place in Greenfeld's one-dimensional celebration of America's cult of liberty, equality, and reason. That a nation of free individuals can also suffer from the pressure of social conformity and from what Alexis de Tocqueville called the tyranny of the majority—despite, as Greenfeld writes, the "plurality of tastes, views, attachments, aspirations, and self-definitions, within the shared national framework"—is neither mentioned nor accounted for. Nor does the time span Greenfeld selected allow her to consider recurrent forms of anti-immigrant nationalism. "Americanism" in its uglier guises is never treated here. I am no fan of systematic debunking and revisionism, but the idyllic image offered by Greenfeld seems a bit too close for comfort to the kind of cultural propaganda offered by the Voice of America during the Cold War. One can admire American national sentiment without concealing its blemishes or the fact (also analyzed by Judith Shklar in her last book, *American Citizenship* [1991]) that the battle for inclusion has been constant, and isn't over yet.

GREENFELD'S enormous effort is serious and impressive. But a satisfactory study of national consciousness would require a far deeper look into the minds of people in a variety of social groups and settings, and into the ways in which high-brow intellectuals, popular culture, the media, the economic elites, and the politicians who pull all the levers of power inculcate such consciousness into citizens—or even, as Eugen Weber has shown in his classic *Peasants Into Frenchmen* (1976), turn subjects into citizens of a nation. And a satisfactory study of nationalism as an ideology would require a much closer examination of political doctrines and programs, and of the reasons why they were embraced by a variety of groups. *Ressentiment* is certainly one of the springs of social action. But how it leads to a particular brand of nationalism, and how it can be redirected against scapegoats, is a far more complicated story than what we are told here. Politics in its broadest sense—not merely what goes on in the political system but its interaction with the society at large—is, unfortunately, absent from the book.

The development of national consciousness is more than a product of “the structural contradictions of the society of orders.” It is, as Greenfeld also says, “*fundamentally, a matter of dignity.*” National consciousness arises in large part as a democratic demand. Every society is hierarchical, whether or not it is a society of orders, and many of the groups in which we live and work—family, profession, church—are also inegalitarian. If nations are imagined communities, as in Benedict Anderson’s celebrated 1983 title, it is because we can indeed imagine a community different from the ones we experience daily, one in which we are all alike and equal, no longer separated by rank and by division of labor. In addition, national consciousness arises from a powerful desire to protect what we see as common to “us” from “others”: enemies, invaders, or intruders. (The “other” need not even be a foreigner: to the revolutionaries of 1789, the resented other was the privileged orders.) Nationalist projects have been built on both of these foundations.

Even more significant than the distinction between liberal and authoritarian national self-images, and between civic and ethnic conceptions of the na-

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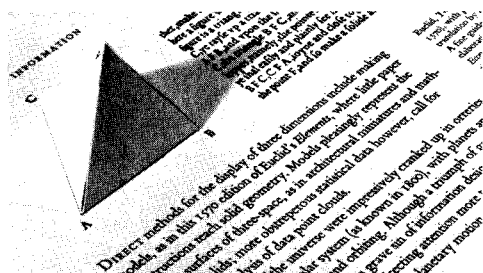
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tion, is the distinction between inclusive and exclusive ones. Ethnic conceptions are by definition exclusive. Non-ethnic ones can be exclusive too, as the case of right-wing French nationalism from Barrès to Jean-Marie Le Pen shows. Moreover, there is rarely a single national self-image or a single form of nationalism. Rival conceptions usually fight it out—as we see today in India, where an inclusive and secular idea, symbolized by Nehru, stands against the religious and exclusive conception embodied by Hinduism. Making different conceptions and programs coexist peacefully within a country is often as hard as making different ethnic groups coexist within a state.

Both the virtues and the flaws of Greenfeld's book force one to think more about a phenomenon whose importance is as profound as are its complexity and diversity. This is no mean achievement. Greenfeld has written mostly about ideas and ideals. She should now turn to societies and politics, and thus yield to what she herself calls "the irresistibly fascinating nature of social processes," which in this book she has resisted only too well. □

Brief Reviews



THERE IS NO BORGES by Gerhard Köpf. *Braziller*, \$18.50. Aboard an alarming airplane bound from Surabaya to Bandung, Mr. Köpf's narrator shares a seat with a garrulous Argentinean who assures him that the author Jorge Luis Borges was an invention of the author Adolfo Bioy Casares, who hired an actor to impersonate his creation. If the reader thinks this an odd basis for a novel, the reader is right. For the most part the book is less a novel than a series of reflections and speculations on the relation between fiction and reality—assuming that there is a reality independent of that constructed by fiction writers. The narrator, a discredited literary academic, is inclined to believe that fiction is in-

deed the only reality, with ultimately disastrous results. Or are they? After so many shifts of perspective by Mr. Köpf, can one accept his conclusion as anything but another twirl of the shell game? Is it really, as it purports to be, a repudiation of Pound's "old bitch gone in the teeth . . . a botched civilization," or is it another device to stimulate questions in the reader's mind? As such a device, it succeeds.

POPLAR FOREST AND THOMAS JEFFERSON by S. Allen Chambers Jr. *The Corporation for Jefferson's Poplar Forest, \$37.50.* Work was still in progress at Monticello and Jefferson was still President when he began building a second house of his own design on another part of his extensive landholdings. Poplar Forest suffered storms, fire, and the revisions of several owners before becoming the object of the restoration campaign now in effect. Proper restoration requires documentary research. This task fell to Mr. Chambers, who discovered so much of interest in old bills and letters that he has written "a dual biography of a special place and an extraordinary human being." It is well worth reading. Jefferson used Poplar Forest as a retreat from official duties and the crowds of visitors who invaded Monticello, and the information Mr. Chambers has turned up concerns family and finances rather than politics. Jefferson enjoyed taking his granddaughters with him to PF, as he referred to it, and while the girls, irreverent teenagers, did not tell their adored grandparent what they thought of the place, their opinions are clear in the letters they wrote to kin of their own generation. The house was an octagon, and the reproduced plans leave little doubt as to why that form of domestic architecture never won wide popularity. What are now called traffic patterns were unthought of by Jefferson, and no amount of subsequent juggling corrected the route problem. In that house you could not get there from here without going somewhere else. The roof, crowned with a skylight, leaked despite years of effort by different roofers with different materials. The place was never actually finished, which would not have troubled Jefferson, because, according to the author, he "was almost constitutionally incapable of living in a completed house." Changes of plan, accidents, and misdirected shipments all added to the ex-



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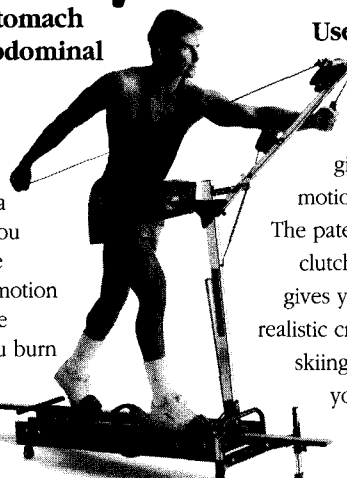
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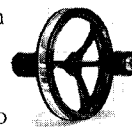
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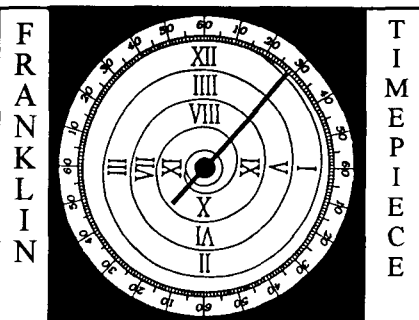
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pense of a building project that dragged on for years while Jefferson slid deeper into debt, for his plantations did not produce enough income to cover ordinary expenses, much less reduce the amounts that he owed to the banks from which he continually borrowed. His letters concerning his finances reveal generosity, unwary commitments, and unsuccessful attempts to find a crop more reliably profitable than tobacco, with which he had steady bad luck—rain, hail, and even the loss by fire of a shed full of curing leaf. They include no plans to reduce expenses. At one point, stranded by bad weather in uncongenial lodgings, Jefferson passed the time by concocting a scheme to pay off the national debt—touching, if somewhat laughable, evidence of his incorrigible optimism and of his endearing willingness to try anything. The restoration of Poplar Forest is a suitable tribute to a remarkable man, and its proposed maintenance as a historic building open to the public is the best possible use for a handsome house that never was livable.

THE ART OF AROUSAL by Dr. Ruth Westheimer. Abbeville, \$35.00. Dr. Westheimer, a psychosexual therapist born in 1928, observed a year or so ago that paintings and sculpture can have "strong erotic content." With the help of an unnamed "art historian" and extensive illustrations, she shares her discovery (which most of us make by age twelve) with the public, hoping that the combination of images and her advice will inspire readers to enjoy sex and avoid venereal disease. The illustrations are well reproduced.

FOR COUNTRY, CAUSE & LEADER by Charles B. Haydon, edited by Stephen W. Sears. Ticknor & Fields, \$25.00. When President Lincoln called for militia in 1861, Charles Haydon, of Michigan, was twenty-seven years old and working as a law clerk for five dollars a week. A loyal Union supporter, he enlisted in the Kalamazoo Light Guard and began at once to keep a journal. It is a splendid record of the first three years of the Civil War, for Haydon recorded matters, large and small, as he saw them, from bread and rice for dinner to the appearance of the *Monitor* ("a small unseemly looking craft") to the population of Washington (the largest classes soldiers and "politicians & prostitutes,

both very numerous and abt equal in numbers, honesty and morality") to the eerie clarity of perception experienced by a man with nowhere to run and nowhere to hide as he waits for shrapnel to strike. He did not overlook the troopers' addiction to whiskey, theft, and whores, remarking early on that if they showed equal enthusiasm for fighting, they would make very good soldiers—as they did. Michigan units earned a high reputation. Haydon wrote well, with style, humor, and intelligence, and one regrets that he did not survive to produce the memoir that he must have had in mind as he filled his small notebooks. Lieutenant Colonel Haydon, who began as a third sergeant, died in 1864, incongruously, of pneumonia. It is a satisfaction to learn that this fine military journalist was a devoted reader of *The Atlantic Monthly*.

A TILER'S AFTERNOON by Lars Gustafsson. New Directions, \$8.95. Mr. Gustafsson's novel describes a Sweden seldom mentioned in either news or travel reports. His tiler is elderly, bored, discontented, and engaged on a job outside the tax collector's vision. He is part of a class of black-market workers, and the old pal who turns up to help him is another of the same evasive ilk. The job is strange from the start and grows steadily more peculiar under the influence of nostalgia and schnapps. As a study of the tattered fringes of socialist society, the book is gloomily adroit.

BLOOD SISTERS by Marilyn Yalom. Basic Books, \$25.00. Ms. Yalom has assembled quotations from the memoirs of women who lived through the French Revolution and presents them, with extensive commentary, as examples of the feminine point of view (what else should they be?) and of the victimization of the female sex (did the Revolution not victimize men as well?). She has trouble with both point of view and victimization in the case of Renée Bordereau, who fought "like a lion" for the Royalists in the Vendée and never altogether returned to stays and petticoats—as who would, having enjoyed the freedom and comfort of trousers? It is disappointing that Ms. Yalom did not include all of Bordereau's short, matter-of-fact account of her experiences.

—Phoebe-Lou Adams

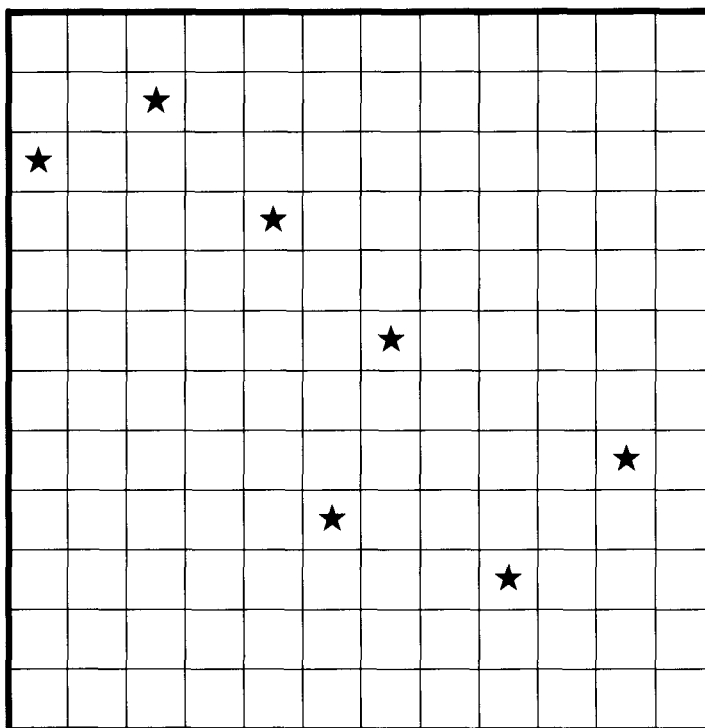
THE PUZZLER

BY EMILY COX AND HENRY RATHVON

CELESTIAL NAVIGATION

This month's puzzle is a real test of solvers' skill in charting a course through an open expanse with little to steer by. To begin with, clues are listed randomly and are numbered simply for convenience. Furthermore, the heavy bars that normally show where entries begin and end have been left out of the diagram, but if they were added they would form a pattern that would be the same when rotated 180 degrees. Our advice to solvers is to let the stars be your guide. Seven clue answers are capitalized; the answer to clue 29 is not common.

See page 107 for Puzzler contest details. The solution to last month's Puzzler appears on page 108.



CLUES

1. Ursa chart is puzzling old astronomer (11)
2. Raggedy Ann carries a girl's tag (4)
3. Embodiment of a Virginia tobacco constituent (6)
4. Coach guys to run (6)
5. Illegitimate state bank's opening so late (8)
6. Make believe place is covered by treaty (7)
7. Flower's arisen in row (6)
8. Worked at almost balletic move (4)
9. Cooper's material about Deerslayer's end fails to sustain (7)
10. Ordinance essentially banning grass (4)
11. Systematically arranged a brutal wrong (7)
12. Unexpected treat ultimately eaten by bird (9)
13. Big bird's brought back darn sandwich (7)
14. Witness richer than the rest is cut initially (6)
15. Read about Republican firm (6)
16. St. Louis organization asks for identification (5)
17. Brainy group exchanged names (5)
18. 1,200 like taking in eastern tourist attractions (6)
19. Rail is taken by kid (8)
20. A narcotic's distributed from Central America (10) (*two words*)
21. Pointless of French to pound and pound (4)
22. Saroyan keeps describing baseball player (6)
23. Dropping its top twice, prairie schooner's rear is better ventilated (6)
24. President playing dance tunes (6)
25. Dessert list enthralls our group at tea, primarily (7)
26. Scarf pinched (5)
27. Verbally bother an old European (4)
28. Finally, Pat shot Terry's secret lover (7)
29. Gaze upon Eliot's spiritual adviser (7)
30. Doctor notices a boater (8)
31. First-class: pretty sharp (5)
32. Destiny turned around one slave (4)
33. Loud noise on top of organ's third chime (4)
34. Exposed, gambled about breaking rank (10) (*hyphenated*)
35. Before bid, get cold (6)
36. A free desert (4)
37. Start of a hole turned up at the border of Robeson's military ornament (7)
38. White powder might make Ron scratch (10)
39. Party in Greece embraces act of union (5)
40. Newly successful delivery service is front for hooker (7)
41. Caught in public, vandal has to take game to extremes (8)
42. Shelters accepting high numbers after a point? (6)
43. Correct don again (7)
44. Yellow traitors turning in slander (7)

NOTE: The instructions above are for this month's puzzle only. It is assumed that you know how to decipher clues. For a complete introduction to clue-solving, send an addressed, stamped long envelope to The Atlantic Puzzler, 745 Boylston Street, Boston, Mass. 02116.

WORD WATCH

BY ANNE H. SOUKHANOV

corporate concierge *noun*, someone hired to help other employees with their personal errands, such as buying gifts and theater tickets, hiring nannies, and arranging for car and home repairs: "He is a *concierge*, apparently the first *corporate concierge* in America, the head porter of a big company that has decided it is a good idea to have somebody on the payroll minding other workers' personal business so they can keep their minds on their work" (*Wall Street Journal*).

BACKGROUND: The *corporate concierge* referred to above works at the headquarters of PepsiCo, in Purchase, New York. He was hired after an employee survey indicated that workers were under stress and had no free time for personal errands. PepsiCo's *concierge* (the word goes back to a Latin term meaning "fellow slave") typically handles more than 20 requests a day—a pace that means both he and his assistant must often take work home at night, and hence have little free time of their own.

hydraulic bollard *noun*, a perimeter-protection device that prevents unauthorized vehicles from entering or exiting a given area by shooting two three-foot-long steel cylinders housed in the ground up into those vehicles: "Hidden Valley, the private, residential development 35 miles north of downtown Los Angeles, became the world's first to purchase a \$50,000 *hydraulic bollard*. . . . About 28 vehicles have been damaged since the bollard was installed last April. Its use sparked a local controversy and threatened lawsuits" (*Roanoke [Va.] Times & World-News*).

BACKGROUND: The *hydraulic bollard*—used primarily to protect embassies, airport runways, and nuclear facilities—is the most extreme device yet employed by a community seeking to insulate itself from rising crime and traffic congestion. Neighborhoods across the country are more commonly

A selection of terms that have newly been coined, that have recently acquired new currency, or that have taken on new meanings, compiled by the executive editor of The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Third Edition.

turning to such protective measures as walls, barbed wire, and round-the-clock guards; in some parts of the country the *gating* of affluent subdivisions—said to increase property values as well as reduce crime—has become routine.

red-diaper baby *noun*, an American born to leftists who were active in the United States from about 1905 to the 1950s: "He was an archetypal 'red-diaper baby,' whose Polish-born parents were active in left-wing causes" (*St. Louis Post Dispatch*).

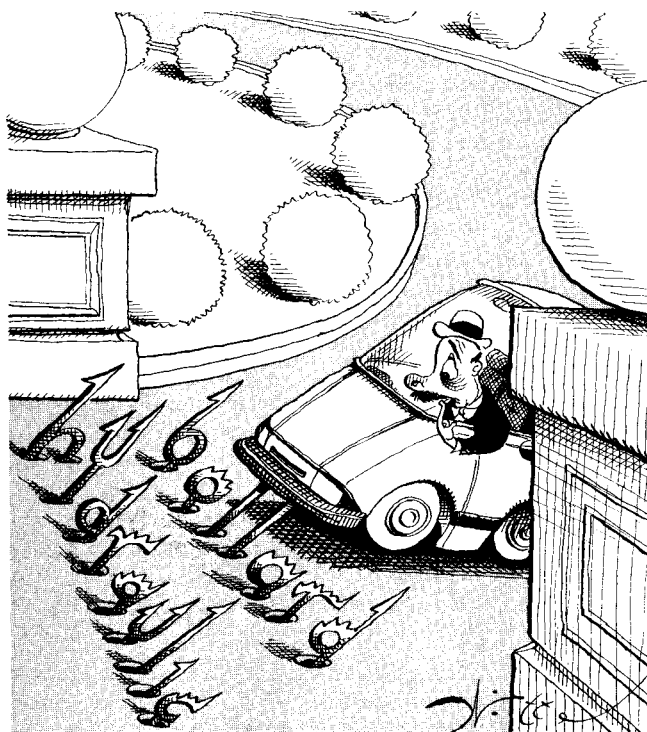
BACKGROUND: Hundreds of thousands of people passed in and out of leftist circles in the United States during roughly the first half of the century. Perhaps 50,000–100,000 of their progeny are alive today. The term *red-diaper baby*, which may be at least sixty years old, has sustained renewed curren-

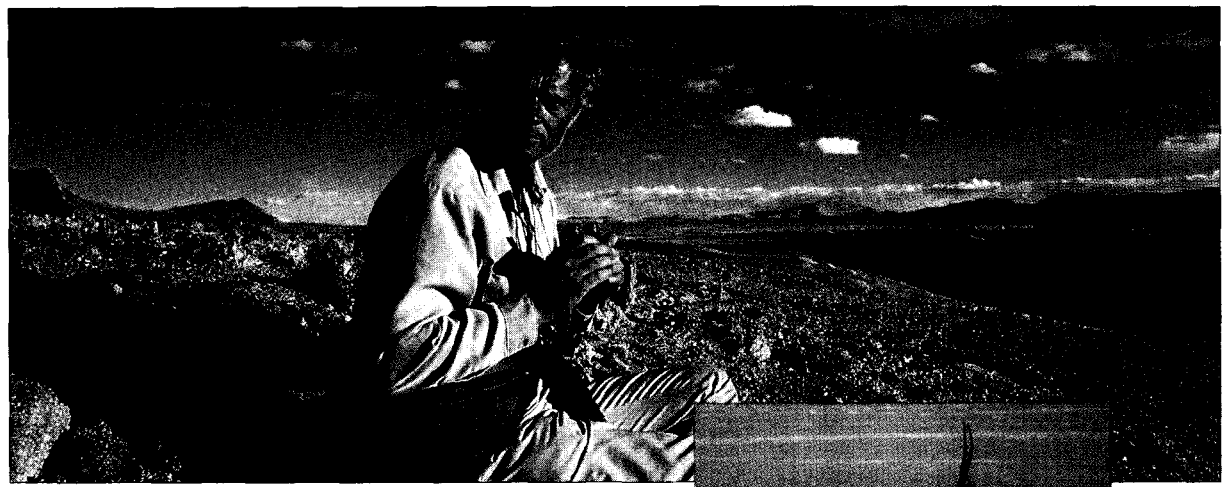
cy of late, especially in connection with documentaries about the children and efforts to organize reunions of them. During the "Red Scare" of the 1950s *red-diaper babies* tended to be moved around a great deal if their parents had gained notoriety or been fired or jailed for their beliefs. Feeling detached from mainstream culture and being sent to the same progressive schools and summer camps, many of them formed strong bonds with one another. During the 1960s a significant number of *red-diaper babies* of college age were active in campus protest movements, notably Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). If the exact number of *red-diaper babies* cannot be computed, neither can the origin of the term be pinpointed. The most commonly held theory is the simplest: that the word *red* refers to communism. A second traces the term to

members of the Communist Party in California during the 1920s, who reportedly used it as a derogatory label for those who they felt took their position in the organization for granted. A third theory, colorful if improbable, holds that Communists in the 1920s were so poor that they used the red flags they received in return for Party dues as diapers for their babies.

WASP Rot Syndrome *noun*, a distinct decline in the economic, political, social, and intellectual hegemony once enjoyed by America's most privileged social class, composed largely of white Anglo-Saxon Protestants: "I have a confession: My family has a social disease. I call it the *WASP Rot Syndrome*. . . . knowing firsthand about *WASP Rot* is why the defeat of the handsome clubman George Bush did not surprise me" (Abigail Trafford in *The Washington Post*).

BACKGROUND: *WASP Rot Syndrome* is a recent expansion of the term *WASP Rot*, which Trafford coined in a 1982 book. The phenomenon it refers to has been documented by sociologists, historians, and other observers. They posit several causes of *WASP Rot Syndrome* (even while they grant numerous exceptions to it), among them the social exclusivity common in this class in the early part of the century, which served to limit new blood and ideas; a tendency in younger generations to rely on trust funds rather than building new capital; the myth of "effortless" success, which helped erode the boldness characteristic of this group in earlier generations; an increased self-absorption and consequent reduced involvement with charitable causes; and, in Trafford's words, the "revolt of WASP women," whose talents, energies, and sacrifices—now often channeled into independent careers—once helped ensure their families' success.





George Schaller on the Tibetan plateau at 17,000 feet.

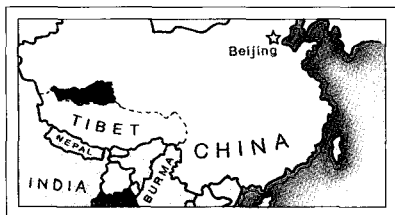
Right: Tibetan antelopes.



Chang Tang—the name means northern plain in Tibetan—is high, austere, and largely unexplored. Rolling away to the horizon, its immensity is broken only by snowcapped ranges. Vegetation is scant, with neither shrubs nor trees to break the expanse. Just a few nomadic herdsmen inhabit the fringes.

Wolves still prowl the plains and snow leopards stalk their prey among the crags; wild yaks forage on the hillsides and herds of Tibetan antelopes migrate over unknown paths. This is a landscape untouched by civilization, virtually the same today as it was over a hundred years ago.

George Schaller, science director



Site of the Chang Tang Reserve in the Tibet Autonomous Region.

of Wildlife Conservation International, has spent four decades in wild and rugged places, studying wildlife, and fighting

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George Schaller

for its survival. And now Schaller and his Chinese and Tibetan colleagues have helped establish a huge reserve in the Chang Tang.

Although the reserve is already the size of Arizona, they hope to expand it to conform to the migrations of antelopes and yaks.

There, Tibet's last great herds can roam free, and the nomads can maintain their traditional culture.

Schaller explains, “If we don't protect the Chang Tang now, the magnificent species found here could soon vanish forever.”

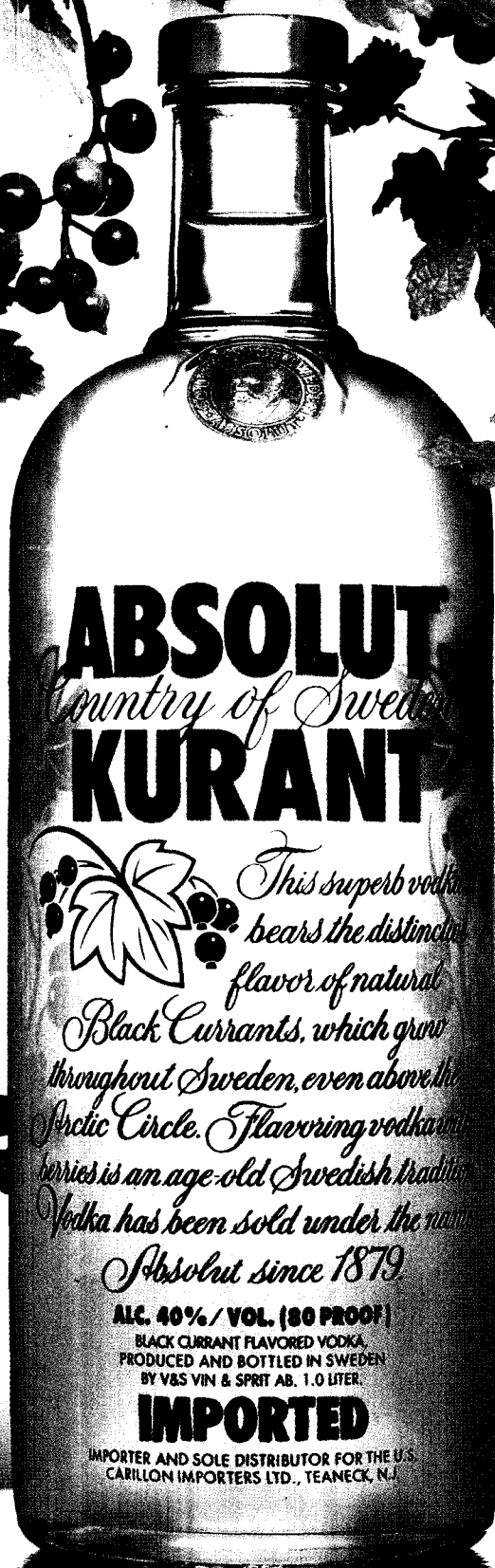
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